No. 18

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critters

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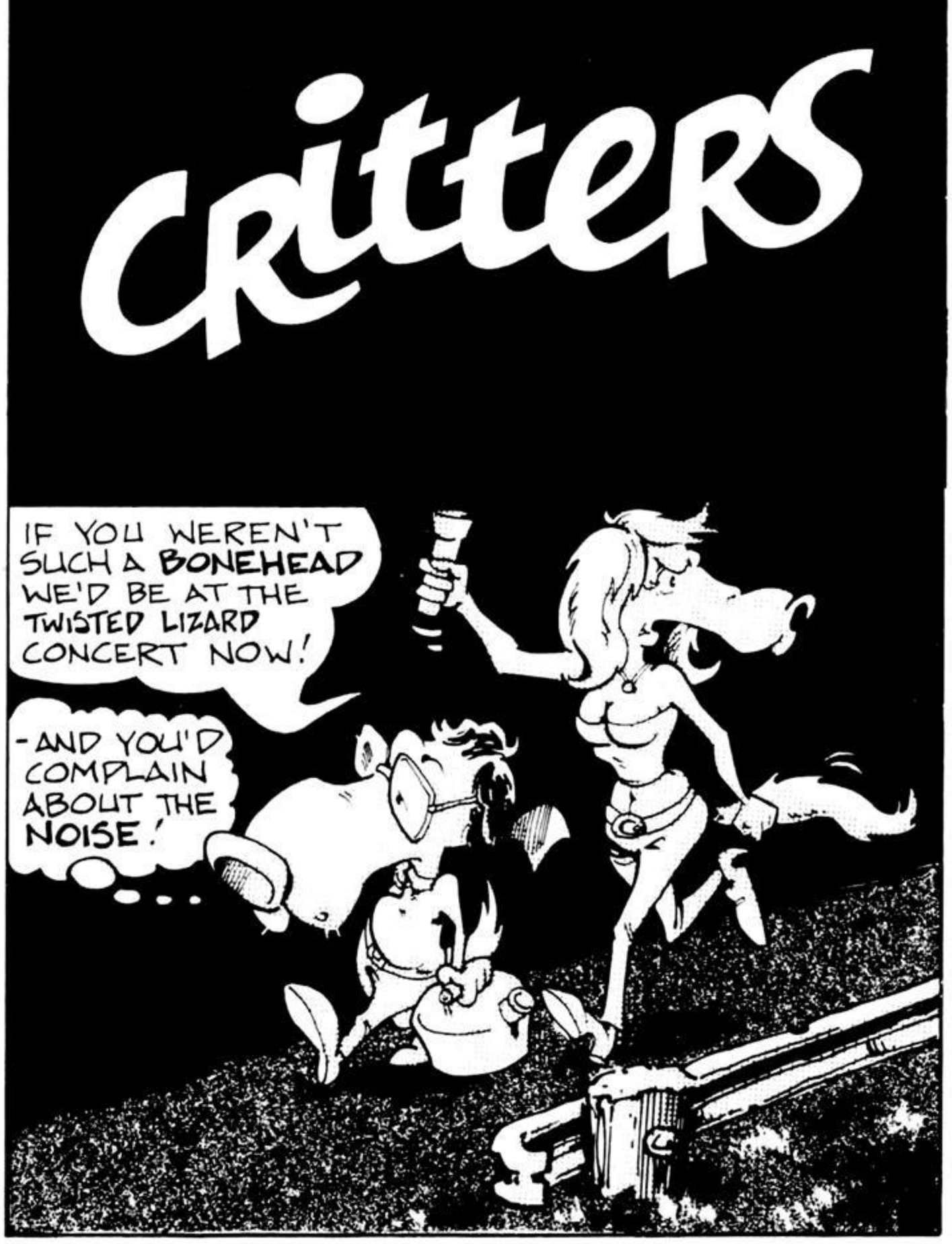

NUMBER 18 **NOVEMBER 1987**

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EDITORIAL

Everyone who reads **Critters** likes something different. One guy loves "Fission Chicken," the other thinks he can draw better than that. One person is convinced "Birthright II" is better than ever, the other says it's too confusing. One counts "Gnuff" as a fave, the other is upset because one of the characters is not behaving nicely. I think it's great! I love it when everyone disagrees. In fact, that's why I threw Usagi Yojimbo out of the comic—**everyone** loved the strip, and what fun is that? If Stan's going to do something that satisfies everyone, let him do it somewhere else. So remember, all you **Critters** artists out there—you'd better annoy, puzzle, or bore at least one of our readers, or you're history.

This may be the new **Critters** credo.

Or maybe I just think that when **I** like a strip others might not immediately take to, if I keep on printing it, it may eventually grow on the readers, and they'll find themselves enjoying something they might have dismissed out of hand a few months earlier.

On another note, yeah, our schedule's a little off. We're working on it. If all things go right, this issue should be out only three weeks or so after the previous, which shipped exactly three weeks after **#16**.

Wondering about the cover repro on this page? It's the brand new, right-off-the-drawing-board cover to **Critters Special #1: Nilson Groundthumper and Hermy**, which collects all of Stan's NG&H tales in one swell volume. Coming your way in September—reserve your copy today!

Speaking of covers, it's a nice one upfront on this particular issue, isn't it? Everyone say thankyoumuch to artists **JIM ENGEL** and **DON TOHT**, who didn't want to "mar the cover with distracting signatures"—a nice bit of modesty in a field where most artists would rather you printed their signatures and left off the art.

See you in twenty-seven or so!

—Kim Thompson

Jim Engel's
LEGGO LAMB
featuring:
GROVER CLEVELAND GOOSE

YOU KNOW, LEGGO, IF YOU BEGIN TO SHOW A LITTLE MORE IMPROVEMENT ON THAT BANJO, I **MIGHT** JUST PUT IN A GOOD WORD FOR YOU WITH MY FORMER CONDUCTOR AT THE PHILHARMONIC...

YOU WERE NEVER IN THE PHILHARMONIC! YOU COULDN'T CARRY A TUNE IN A **WHEELBARROW!!**

FIRST KAZOO VIRTUOSO THEY EVER HAD! YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN ME IN MY CUMBERBUND!

I SHOULD'VE SEEN YOU IN A **STRAITJACKET!**

THAT SORT OF ATTITUDE IS WHY YOU'LL NEVER ENJOY THE RESPECT OF THE COMMUNITY AS **I** DO...

!

GROVER, WHERE DO YOU **GET** THIS STUFF?!? YOU WORK AS AN **AIR PUMP** OPERATOR AT "VITO'S GAS-UP'N' GET OUT"!! NOT ONLY DO YOU **NOT** ENJOY THE RESPECT OF THE **COMMUNITY**...

...YOU BARELY ENJOY **MY** RESPECT!!!

LEGGO, IF YOU WERE A DOMESTIC IN MY EMPLOY, I'D **DISMISS** YOU FOR ADDRESSING ME IN SUCH TONES!

SAY! AS I EXIST AND EXCHANGE CARBON DIOXIDE FOR OXYGEN...

...IF IT ISN'T OLD "HANK THE BLANK" ADVANCING IN OUR DIRECTION!

OH, GREAT! HE'S THE ONLY GUY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHO **MAY** ACTUALLY BE CRAZIER THAN **YOU**!

LEGGO, YOU SHOULDN'T BEGRUDGE OTHERS THEIR SUCCESSES! NOW, BE QUIET! HE IS UPON US!!
HMMPH!
SLAM!

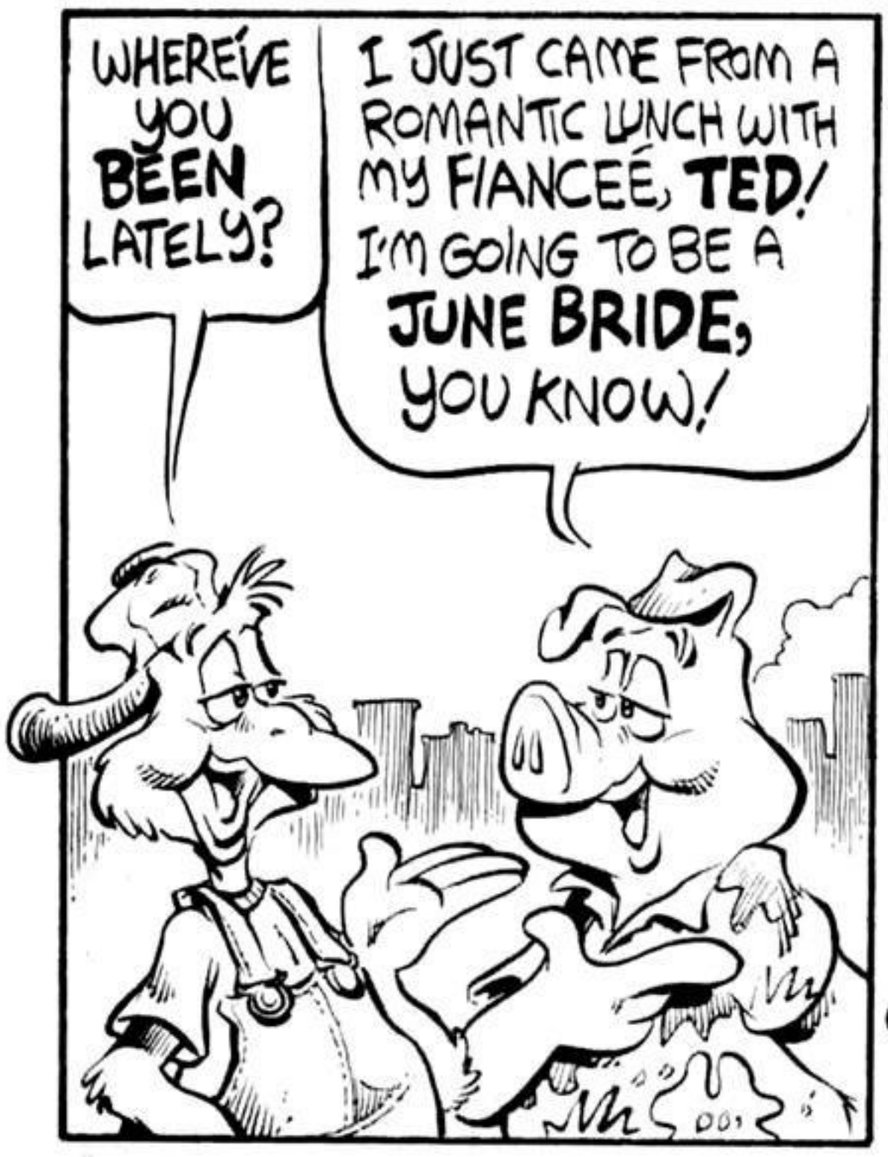
HANK THE BLANK!
BOB MOOSE!
GROVER GOOSE.
GROVER GOOSE!

YEAH...YEAH, GROVER MOOSE! AND CLEM O'CLAM! HOW ARE YA, FELLOWS?

OH, FINE! FINE!
GOOD...

UH... YOU ARE FELLOWS, RIGHT?

YES, YES WE ARE! GIRLS... UH... PROTRUDE MORE!
I REMEMBER NOW...


WHEREÉVE YOU BEEN LATELY?
I JUST CAME FROM A ROMANTIC LUNCH WITH MY FIANCEÉ, TED! I'M GOING TO BE A JUNE BRIDE, YOU KNOW!

BUT, HANK! YOU'RE A GUY!!
I AM?!?

ACK!
ACK!
PTOO! PTOO!!

UH, LET'S KEEP THAT UNDER OUR... UH, WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS ON YOUR HEADS CALLED?
HATS!

RIGHT, CATS! UNDER YOUR CATS! I MEAN, MY SLATE'S CLEAN! AFTER ALL, THEY DONT CALL ME "HANK THE"... UH..."THE"...
"BLANK!"

WHAT WAS THAT?!?
HANK THE NOTARY PUBLIC?
HANK THE PRETZEL?
HANK THE BEAT GOES ON?
HANK THE ESCELATOR?
HANK THE EGGPLANT?
HANK THE PNEUMATIC TUBE?
HANK THE TOASTER?
HANK THE AMAZING CHIA PET?
HANK THE GEODISIC DOME?
THE BLANK!
THE BLANK!
THE BLANK!
THE BLANK!
THE BLANK!
THE BLANK!
THE BLANK!
THE BLANK!!

WAIT A MINUTE!! I HAD IT TATTOOED ON MY CHEST, SO I WOULDN'T FORGET!

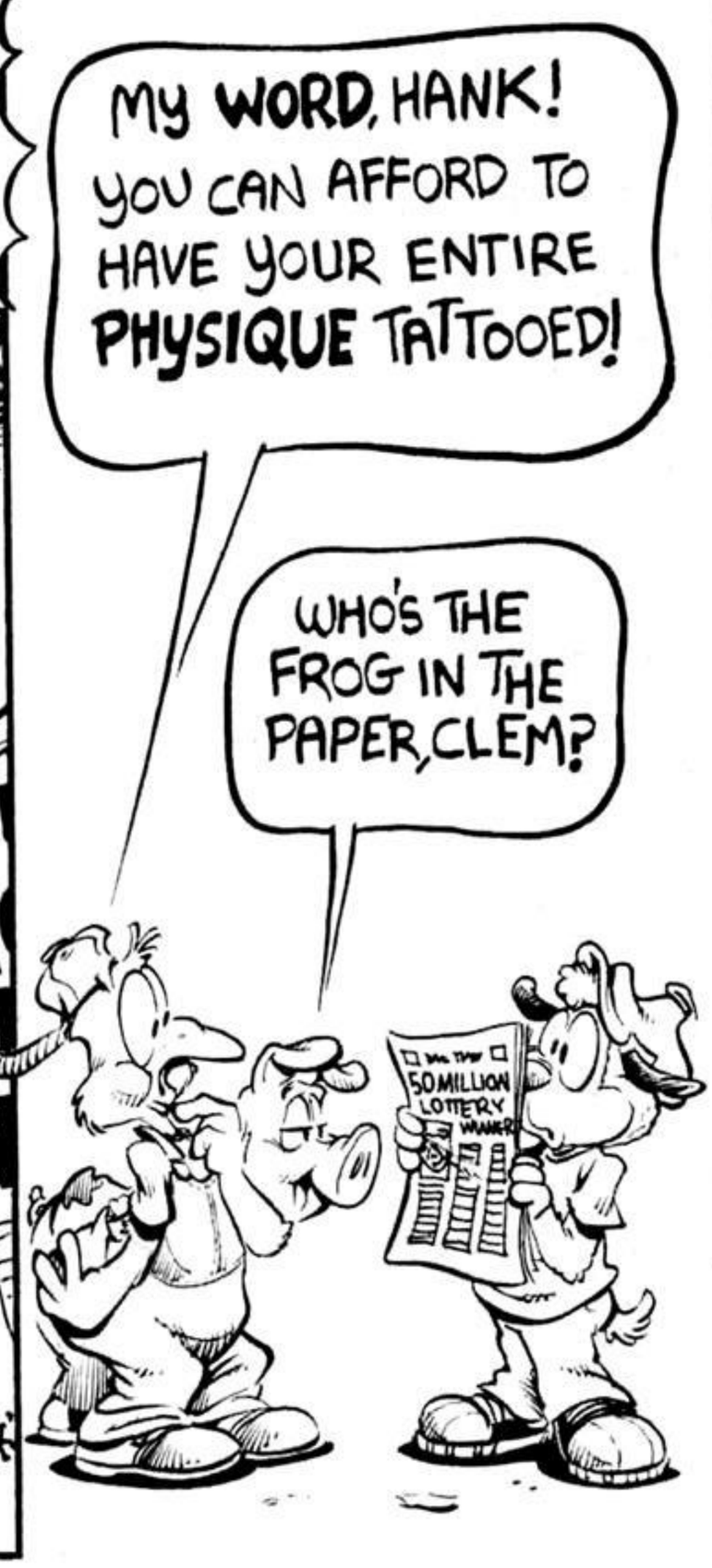
SEE? BLANK! "HANK THE BLANK!!"

SAY! THAT'S A BEAUTIFUL TATTOO, HUH, LEGGO?
YIPE!

WAS IT EXPENSIVE?
NAH... JUST 400 BUCKS! FOR SOME REASON THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO USE NEEDLES OR DYE, SO IT WAS CHEAP!
DAILY 25¢
SUNDAY $1.25
50 MILLIO
LOTTERY
WINN
"Hank the Blank"

HMMM... WITH WHAT I MAKE OPERATING THE AIR HOSE AT THE GAS STATION, I COULD SAVE UP THAT MUCH IN JUST A THOUSAND YEARS!
HHHEEEEY!!

HEY, GROVER! LOOK IT THIS! LOOK WHO WON THE 50 MILLION DOLLAR LOTTERY!!
WEATHER: Not So Hot
50 MILLI
LOTTE
W
"Hank the Blank"


MY WORD, HANK! YOU CAN AFFORD TO HAVE YOUR ENTIRE PHYSIQUE TATTOOED!
WHO'S THE FROG IN THE PAPER, CLEM?
50 MILLION LOTTERY WINNER

THAT'S NO FROG, HANK! IT'S A PIG! AND THAT PIG IS YOU!!
AM I A PIG?
A VERITABLE PIGGY BANK ACCORDING TO THAT!

WOW! SEZ HERE I WAS AWARDED 50 MILLION DOLLARS YESTERDAY AFTERNOON! I WONDER WHAT I DID WITH IT!
SCRATCH! SCRATCH!
CAL-MART

YOU MEAN TO SAY YOU DONT KNOW WHAT YOU DID WITH FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS?!?

GEE, WITH 50 MILLION DOLLARS, TED AND I COULD HAVE THE WEDDING WEVE ALWAYS DREAMED OF...
I CANT BELIEVE THIS! THE WHOLE WORLD HAS GONE NUTS!!

MAYBE I COULD SELL THESE TWO TO SOME KIND OF RESEARCH LAB...
I THINK YOU LOST THIS...

YA KNOW, IF YOU GUYS'D HELP ME FIND THAT MONEY, I'D BE GLAD TO SPLIT IT WITH YOU!

NOW LET'S SEE...IF I WAS YOU, WHAT WOULD I DO WITH 50 MILLION DOLLARS?

YOU DIDN'T SPEND 50 MILLION DOLLARS ON PSYCHIATRIC HELP DID YOU?

I DON'T KNOW...

WHAT'S "PSYCHIATRIC HELP"?

NAH! YOU COULDN'T HAVE SPENT IT ALL SINCE YESTERDAY! HEY! DO YOU HAVE A **BANK**?

NO, BUT IF WE FIND THE MONEY, I COULD **BUY** ONE!

AAAARRGGHH!! YOU'RE NO HELP!! THIS IS **IMPOSSIBLE**!

BUY A **PINK** ONE!

WOULDN'T THAT CLASH WITH THE **ORANGE** MONEY?

MONEY IS **GREEN**!

I THOUGHT **PICKLES** WERE GREEN!

I'VE **GOT** IT!

HANK, I'M GOING TO HYPNOTIZE YOU, AND WE'LL FIND THE ANSWER IN YOUR UNCONSCIOUS MIND...

THAT'S A LOT OF GROUND TO **COVER**, BUT...

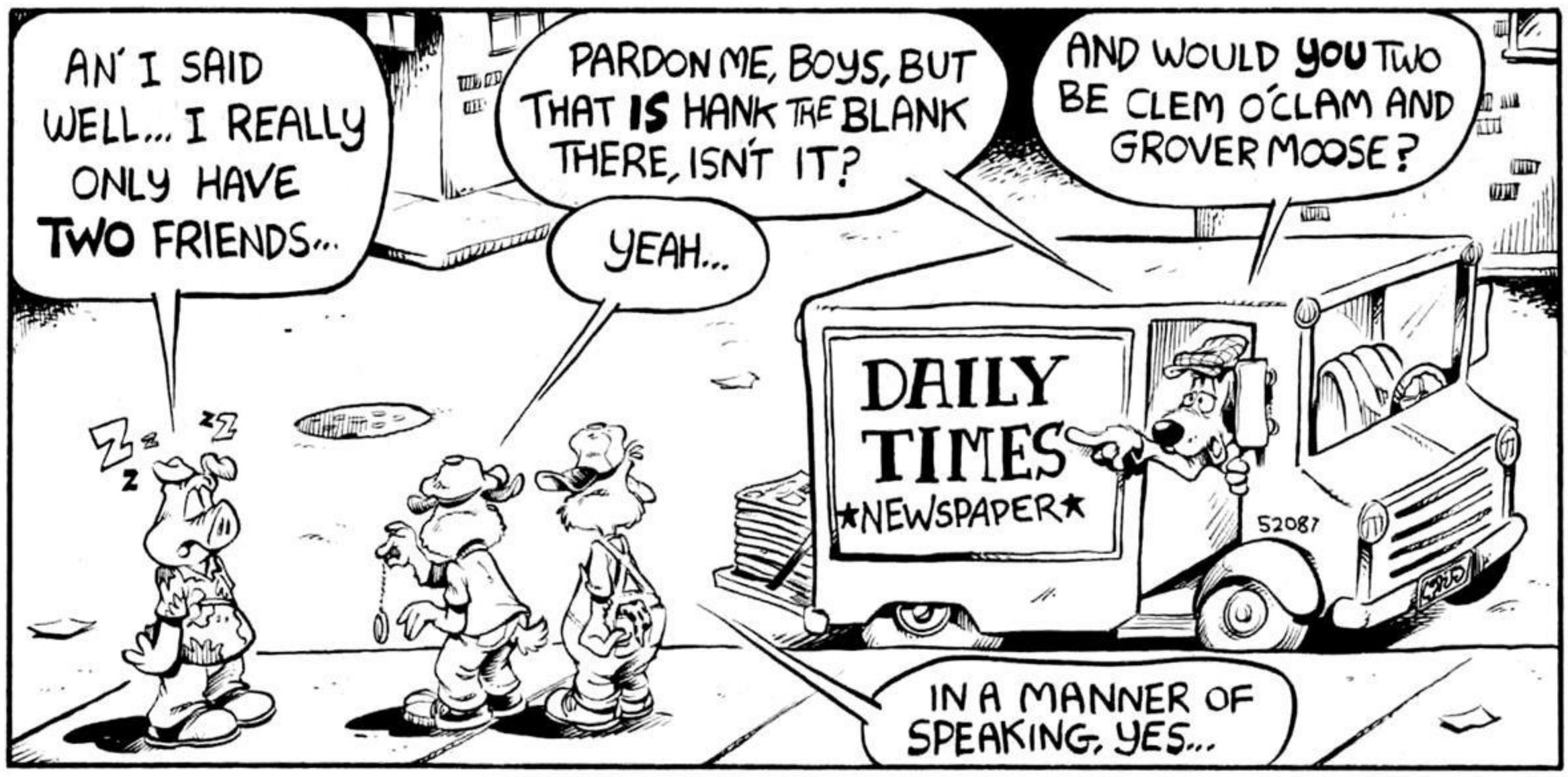
CLOSE YOUR EYES, HANK! SLOWLY... SLOWLY...

YOU'RE GETTING SLEEPY... ...SLEEPY...

SOON...

ALLRIGHT HANK, AFTER THEY HANDED YOU THE CHECK FOR 50 MILLION **THEN** WHAT HAPPENED?

THEN THE MAN FROM THE NEWSPAPER TOOK MY PICTURE AN' SAID I'D BE ON THE FRONT PAGE, AN' HOW I'D BETTER GET SOME EXTRA COPIES FOR ALL MY FRIENDS...



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LIONHEART part two

PURSUIT!

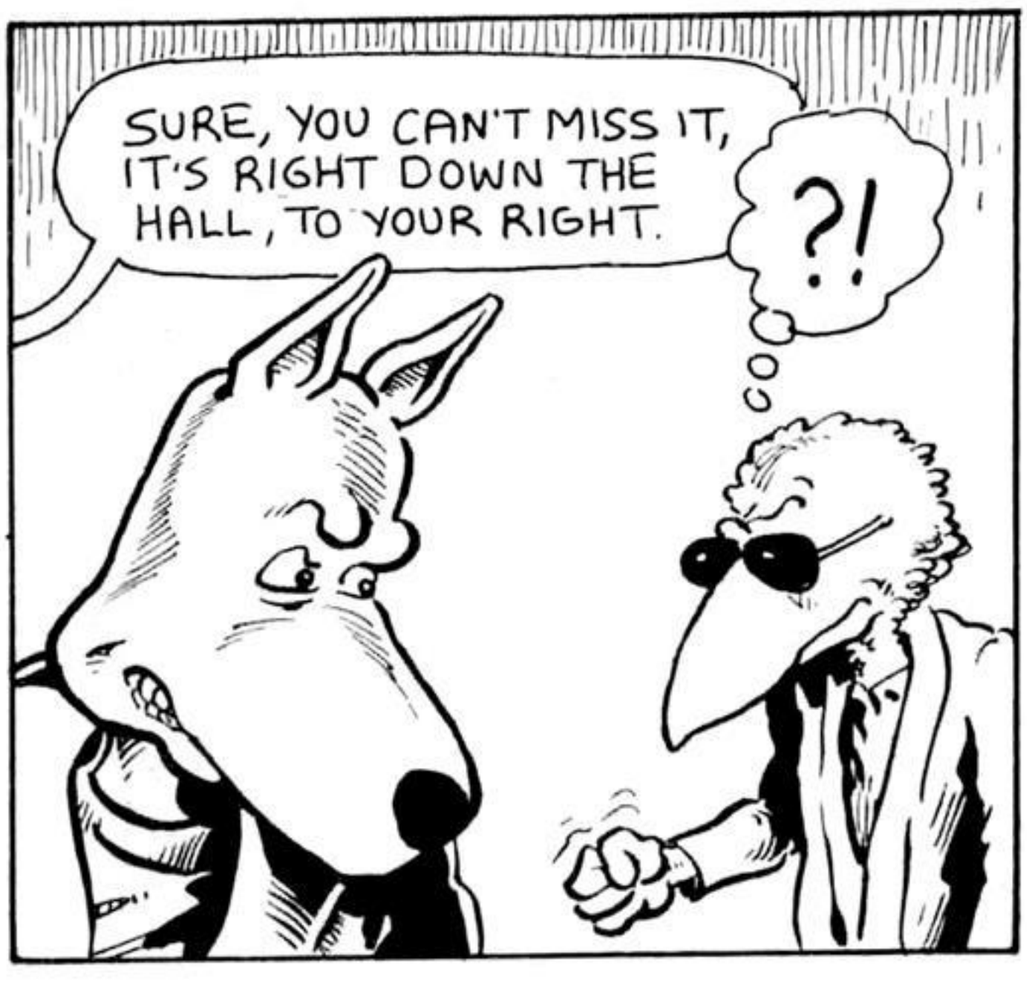
OH YEAH? WE ALREADY ICED ONE HOTSHOT LAWYER OVER THOSE TAPES TEN YEARS AGO. WE DIDN'T GET CAUGHT THEN-- WE WON'T GET CAUGHT NOW.
BUT, I'M A REASONABLE GUY... I'LL GIVE YOU SIXTY SECONDS TO RECONSIDER MY OFFER.

AHEM.
OKAY, OKAY-- I'LL...

NOK NOK
ROOM SERVICE!
YEAH, DOOR'S OPEN, COME ON IN!
BLAST IT!

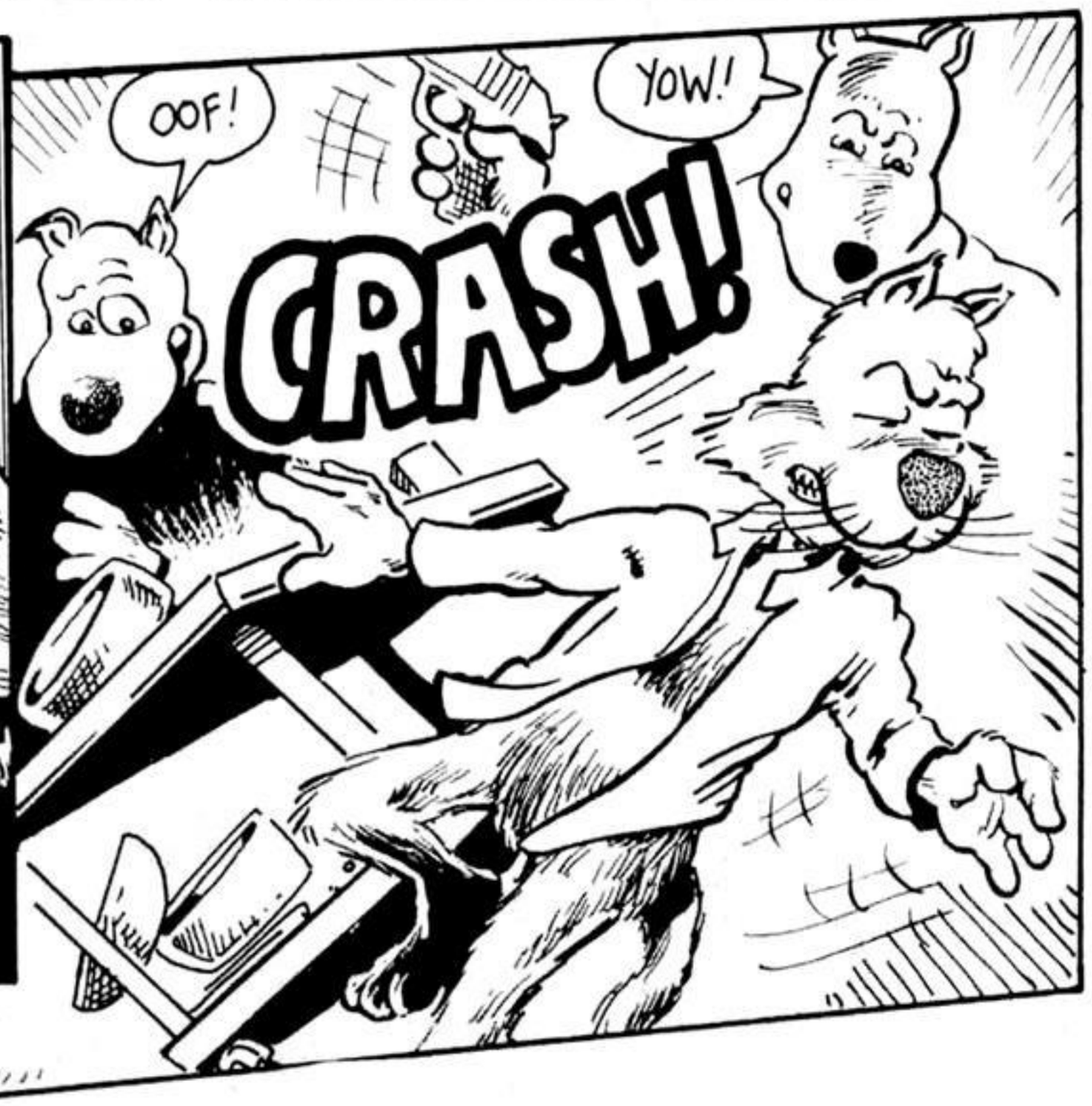
HIDE YOUR PIECE BEHIND YOUR COAT, TRAVIS... YOU'RE STILL COVERED, CAT, SO BE COOL.

HERE YOU GO, PAL;- DOUBLE CHEESE PIZZA WITH TRIPLE ANCHOVIES.
THANKS. UH, SAY, COULD YOU SHOW ME WHERE THE ICE MACHINE IS AT?


SURE, YOU CAN'T MISS IT, IT'S RIGHT DOWN THE HALL, TO YOUR RIGHT.
?!

LOOK, I'M KINDA BAD WITH DIRECTIONS... CAN YOU TAKE ME THERE?
UH, OKAY, I GUESS...
WE'LL GO ALONG.
TED

SO, UH, LET ME GUESS-- THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME IN A HOTEL, RIGHT?
STAIRS


OOF!
YOW!
CRASH!

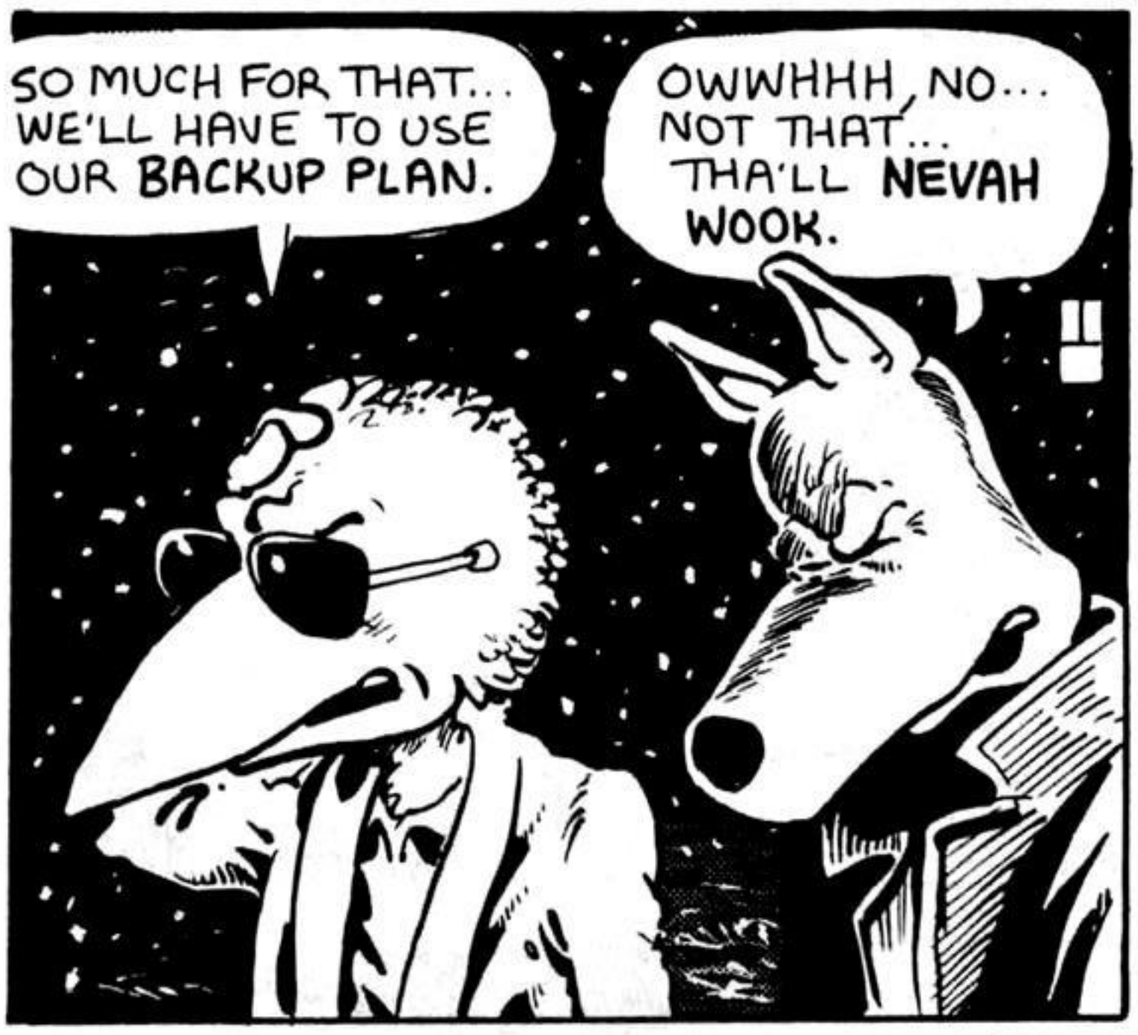
DAMN, HE'S GETTING AWAY!
GIT BACK 'ERE, CAT!

SLAM!

ENTR

BRADBURY
PUFF HUFF

HUFF PUFF LINE ART. PUFF
YES SIR, I RECALL.
SLAM!


SO MUCH FOR THAT... WE'LL HAVE TO USE OUR BACKUP PLAN.
OWWHHH, NO... NOT THAT... THA'LL NEVAH WOOK.

NOK NOK NOK! NOK NOK!
LES, OPEN UP, QUICK, IT'S ME!
210
WHAT'S WRONG? I WAS JUST ABOUT TO TAKE A SHOWER...

FORGET THAT, BIG TROUBLE! THRAPP'S ONTO US, HE'S GOT TWO GOONS OUTSIDE WHO'D LIKE TO PUNCH YOUR TICKET.
WELL, WE WON'T BE SAFE IN HERE FOREVER-- POLCON ENDS TOMORROW. I THINK WE SHOULD MAKE A RUN FOR IT.

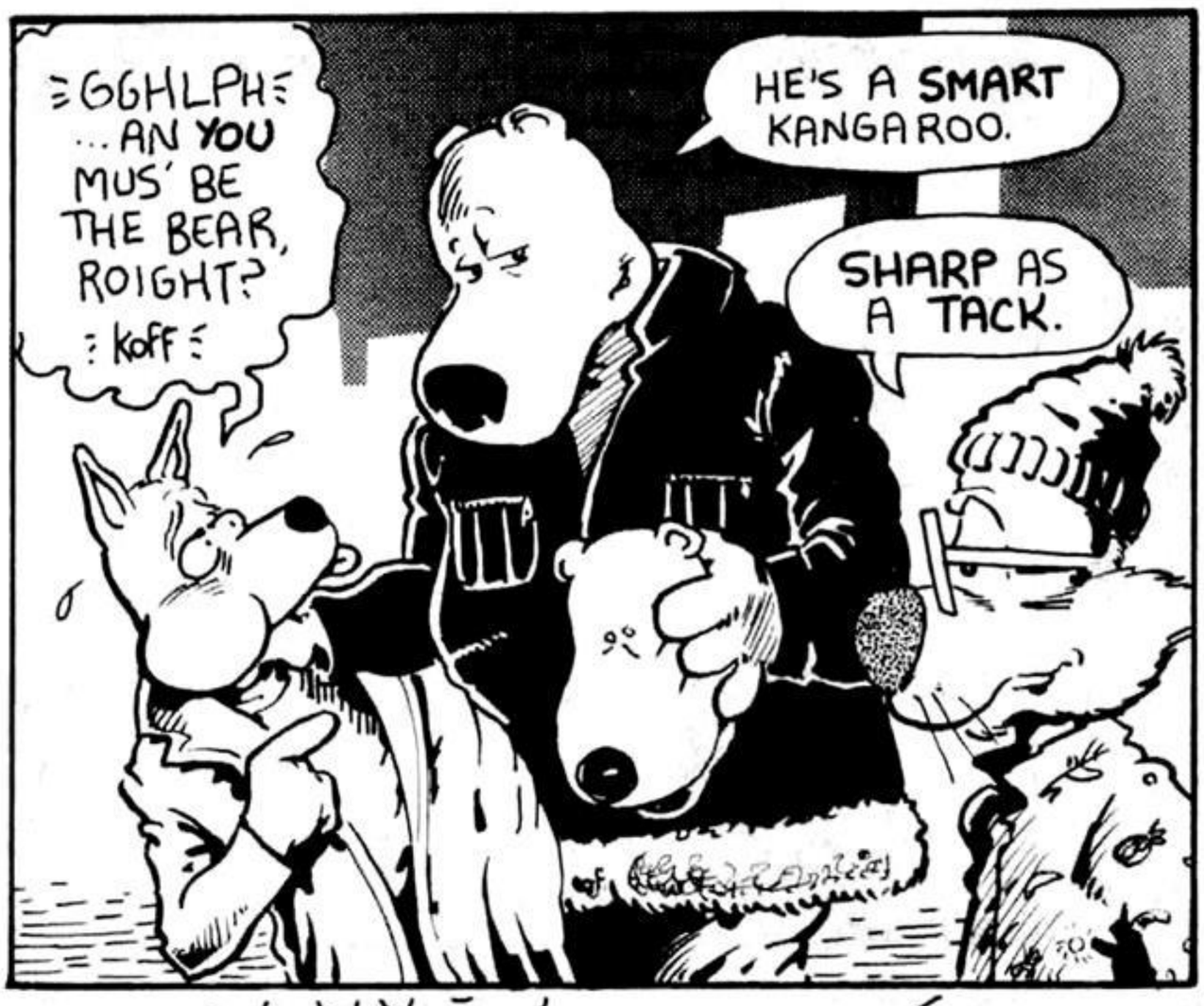
MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE...

SHORTLY...

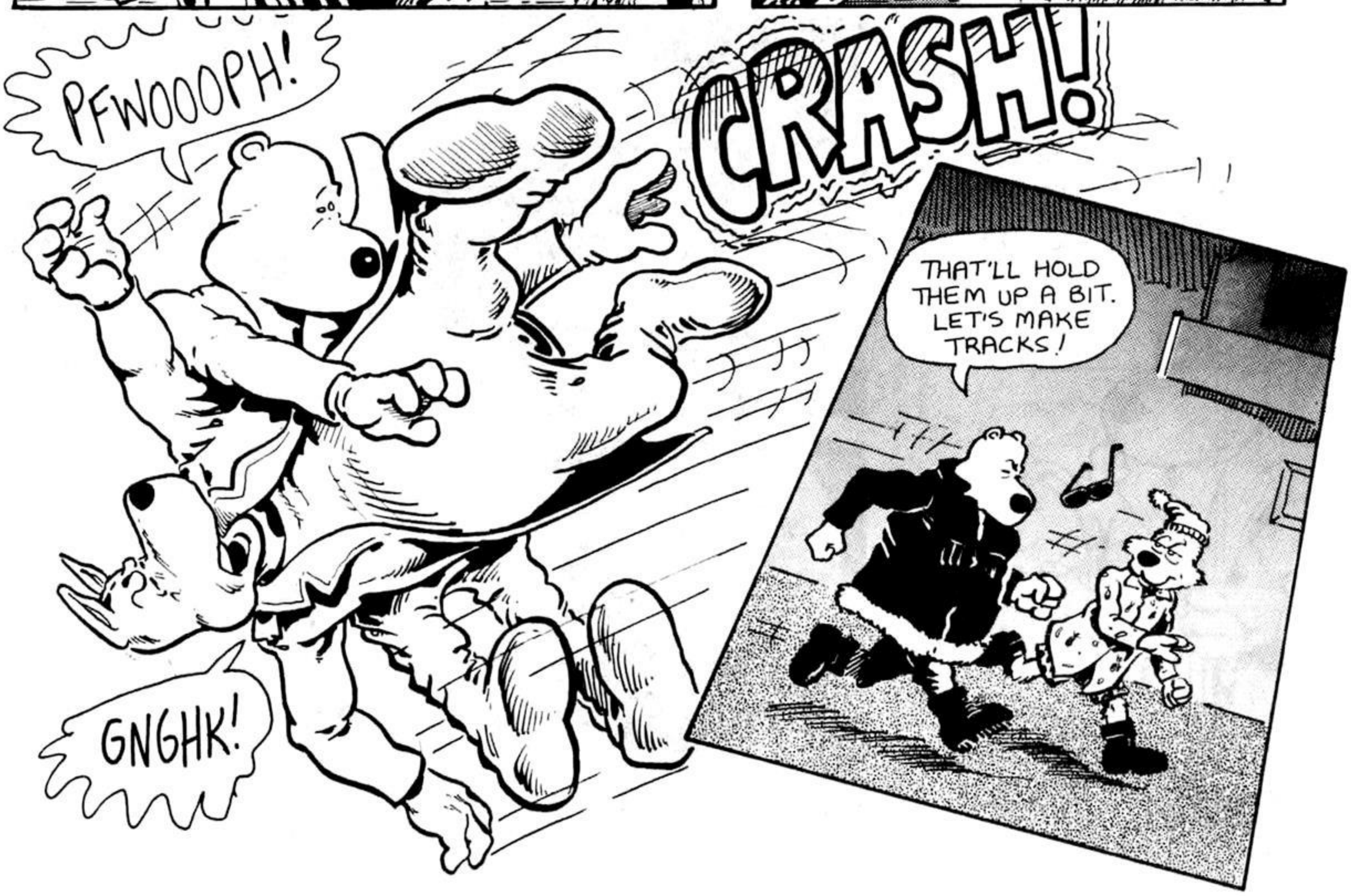
'KAY. THANKS ANYWISE.

SAY, YOU'RE A CAT, AINTCHA?

GRAB!
SPLOOGT!


≡GGHLPH≡ ...AN YOU MUS' BE THE BEAR, ROIGHT? ≡koff≡
HE'S A SMART KANGAROO.
SHARP AS A TACK.

... SO, GENTLEMEN, IF YOU COULD HELP ME LOCATE MR. WAZLER, I WOULD BE GRATEFUL...
HEADS UP!


PFWOOOPH!
CRASH!
THAT'LL HOLD THEM UP A BIT. LET'S MAKE TRACKS!
GNGHK!

ALLRIGHT, YOU TWO, BREAK IT UP!
NO FIGHTING!
LET ME GO, YOU STUPID POLAR HEADS! LEGGO!
SHRI·I·I·P!
WHOA, LOOK! HE'S SOME KINDA FREAK!
AFTER THEM! FASTER!
AHM RUNNIN' AS FAST AS I CAN!
CLOP! CLUMP! CLOMPF!
THEN SHOOT THEM!
ROIGHT, ROIGHT!
BANG! BANG! BANG!
WATCH OUT!!
SORRY, MITE, AH CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITH THESE 'ORRIBLE BEAR PAWS!
WHOA! THOSE WERE GUNSHOTS! I THINK I'M READY TO PANIC NOW.
WE NEED TO GET SOME COVER -- FOLLOW ME!

I CAN'T DO THAT, YOU DOPE!
OH YEAH.
RIGHT.
LEAP!
REAGAN AGAIN
I TOLYA IT WAS A LOUSY PLAN!
JUST STOP WHINING AND PULL!
RRIIP!
AHHH, NOW I'LL GET 'EM!

SPOP!
SPAP!
HAHA, SUCK SLUSH, YOU PINHEAD!

I DON'T MEAN TO BE A NAG, BUT HOW ABOUT THAT CAR YOU PROMISED?

NO PROBLEM... UH, IS A FORD OKAY BY YOU?
HENH? SURE. WHY?

RAP!
RAP!
RAP!

YEAH? CAN I HELP YOU GUYS?

HWOOOOOP!
ZIPP!

SKREEE!
AW, CRAP!

WE GOTTA GET TO OUR CAR, QUICK!
FORGET IT, THE CAR KEYS ARE IN MY OTHER LEGS.
SHEEZ, WE'RE SUNK... THE COPS ARE GONNA BE LOOKING FOR US. MAYBE WE SHOULD STAY OUT OF THE COUNTRY A WHILE.

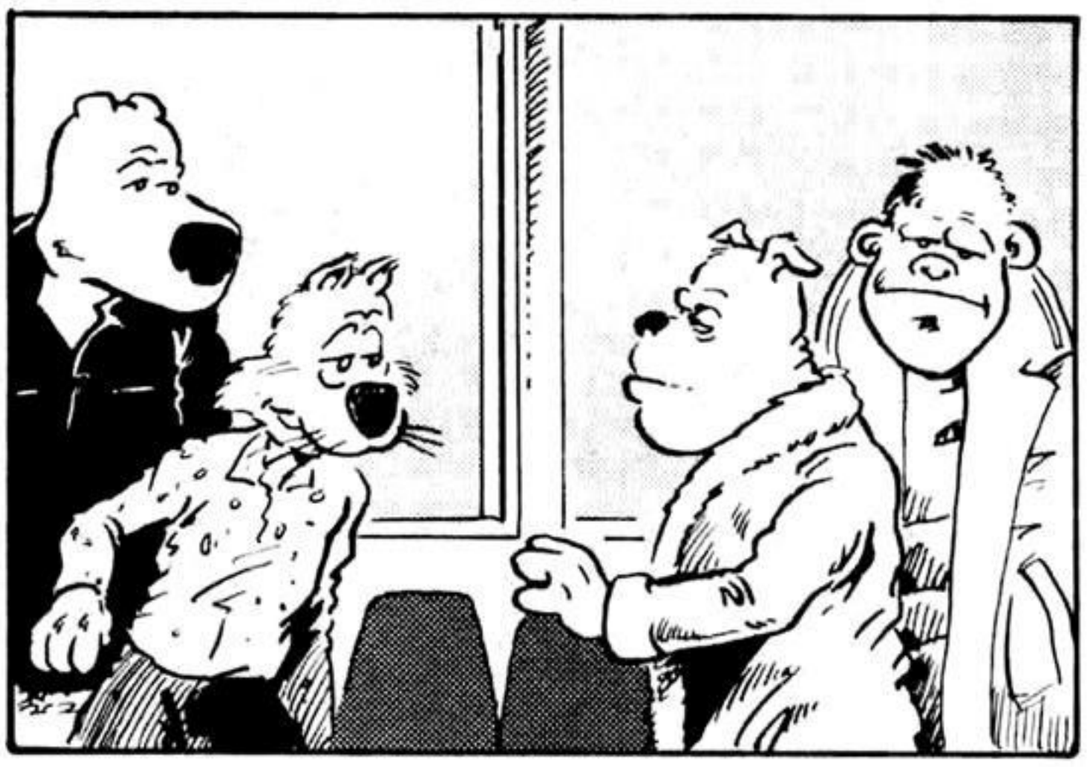
I DON'T THINK THEY'RE GOING. TO FOLLOW...
A PERFECT ESCAPE! UH, ALTHOUGH I FEEL AWFUL SORRY FOR THE GUY WHO WAS DRIVING...
ME TOO, BUT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE.
I REALLY FEEL BAD ABOUT IT.

YEAH.

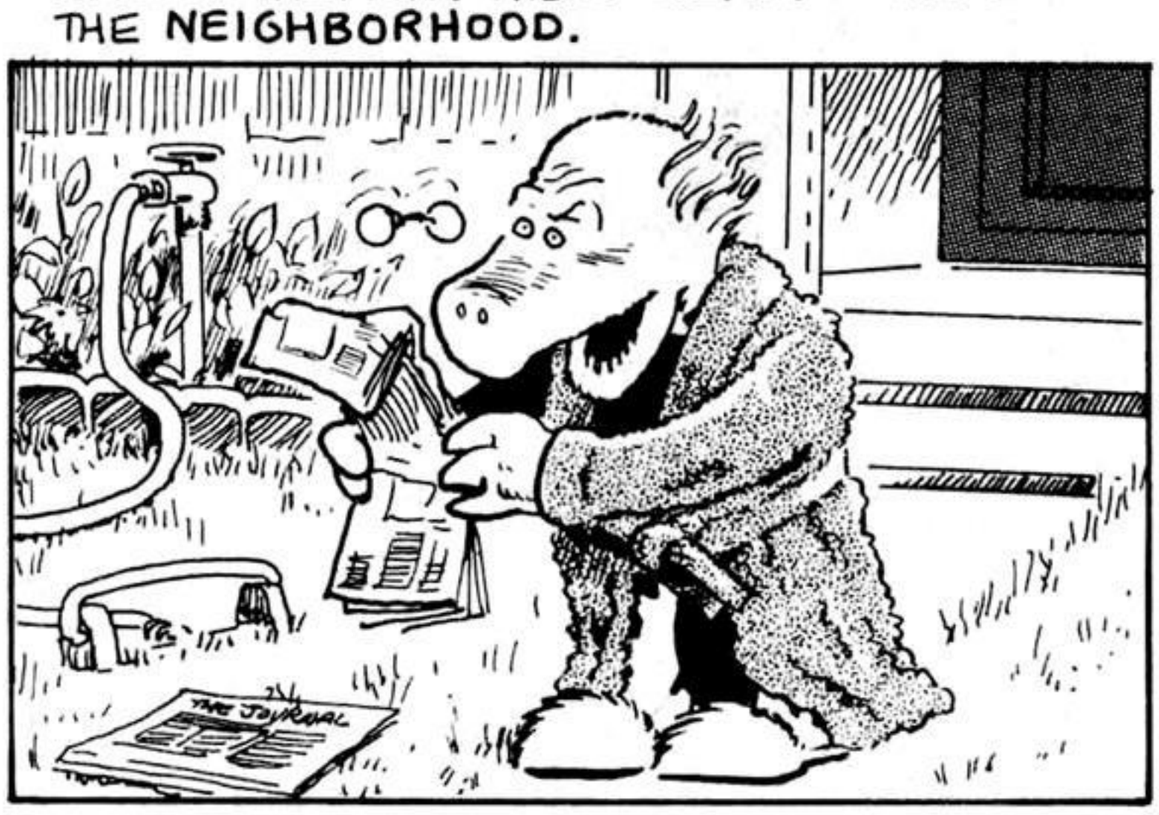
I WONDER IF HE'S GOT ANY GOOD TAPES?
LET'S HAVE A LOOK.

EPILOGUE

GETTING **HOME** WAS SIMPLE ... I PHONED LOU BEFORE LEAVING CANADA, SO THAT AN **ESCORT** WAS WAITING WHEN WE LANDED IN PITTSBURGH.

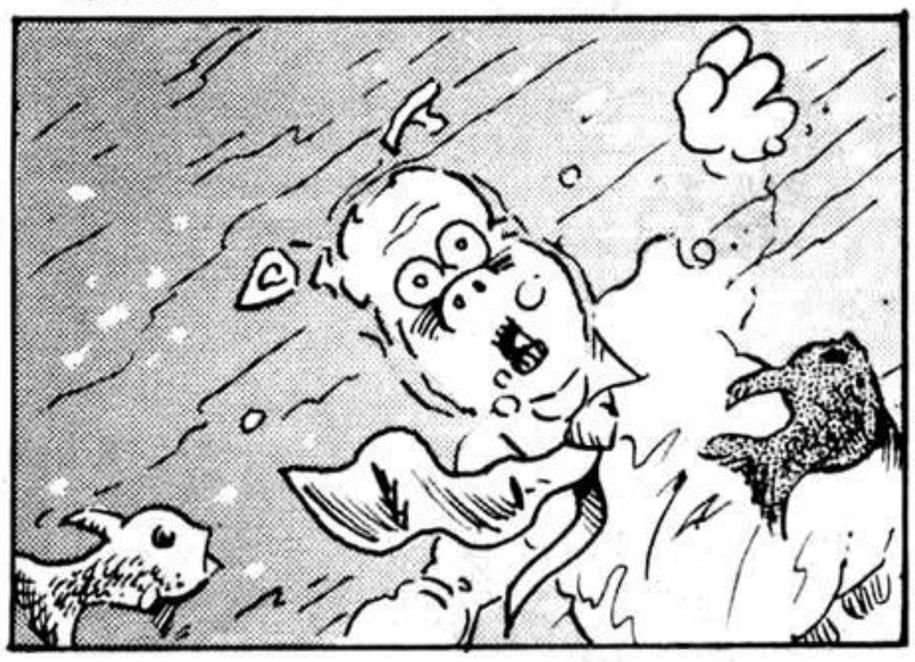


THE NEXT MORNING, THRAPP AWOKE TO FIND HIS **FACE** LAYING ON EVERYONE'S LAWNS. THEY **SAY** HIS **SCREAM** WOKE UP THE **NEIGHBORHOOD.**



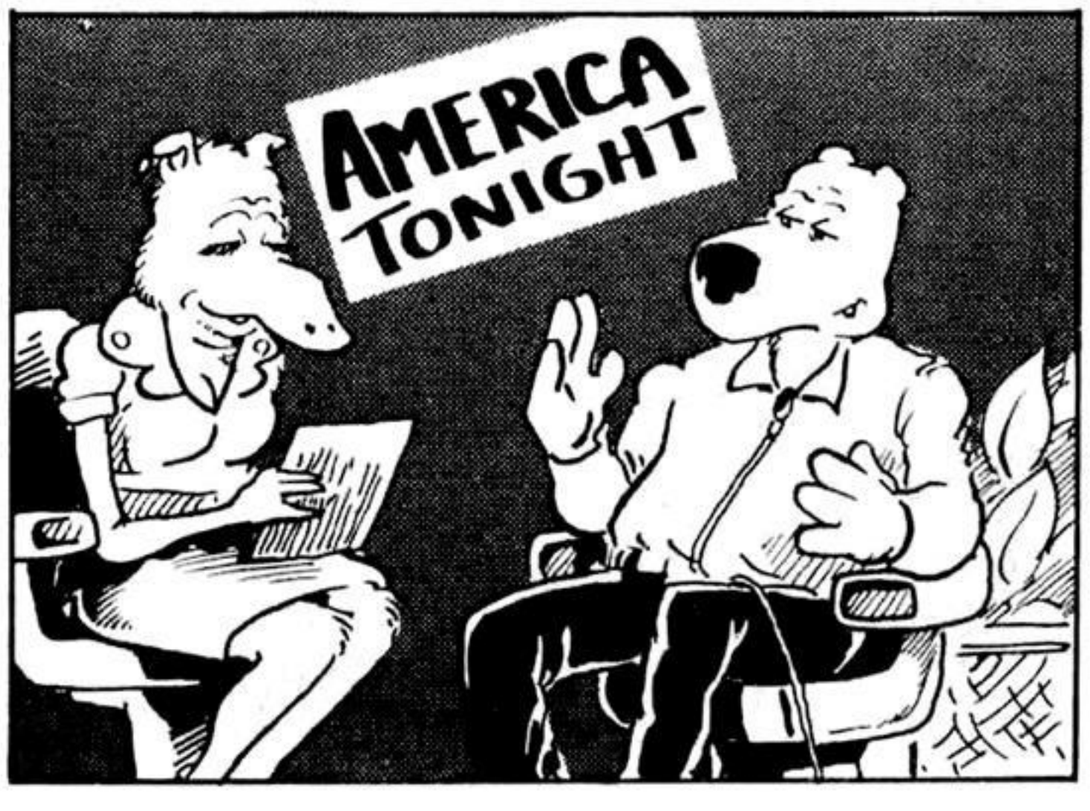
ONCE THE **D.A.** GOT INVOLVED, MORE PEOPLE CAME FORWARD TO SHED LIGHT ON THRAPP'S ACTIVITIES... NOW WE KNOW WHERE THE TAPES **CAME FROM:** MOE KIRSCH, WHO MADE THEM WITH THE INTENTION OF **BLACKMAILING** THRAPP. BUT, **ODDLY ENOUGH,** MOE AND HIS AUTOMOBILE SORT OF **BLEW UP.**

KIRSCH HAD GIVEN **COPIES** OF THE RECORDINGS TO HIS LAWYER, WHO, BEING ABOUT AS **SMART** AS HIS CLIENT, OFFERED TO **SELL THEM** BACK TO THRAPP FOR A **SMALL FORTUNE.** THAT WAS SHORTLY **BEFORE** HIS **BODY** TURNED UP FLOATING IN THE **MONONGAHELA RIVER.**



THE TAPES **REMAINED** WHERE HE HAD **HIDDEN** THEM, UNTIL LES FOUND THEM. **TOO BAD** HE WON'T BE WORKING ON THE TRIAL, BUT IT'S GIVEN HIS CAREER A BOOST, NONETHELESS.

I'M GLAD JUST TO BE SAFE AND **WARM** AT HOME. I SWORE I'D **NEVER** GO BACK TO **CHURCHILL**, BUT WHO KNOWS -- LES AND I HAVE BEEN NAMED **GUESTS OF HONOR** FOR NEXT YEAR'S POLCON.



TROUBLE, YOU SEE, HOUNDS ME. IT DOGS MY STEPS AND NIPS AT MY HEELS. IT HAS TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT I'M SECRETLY...

THE BLUE BEAGLE

ART & STORY BY TIM FULLER © 1987

MAYBE SOMEONE WILL PICK US UP

EEEEK!!

BUT SUDDENLY OUR LITTLE TROUBLES DIDN'T SEEM THAT BAD. SUDDENLY WE WERE HAVING A...

CLOSE ENCOUNTER IN THE WORST WAY

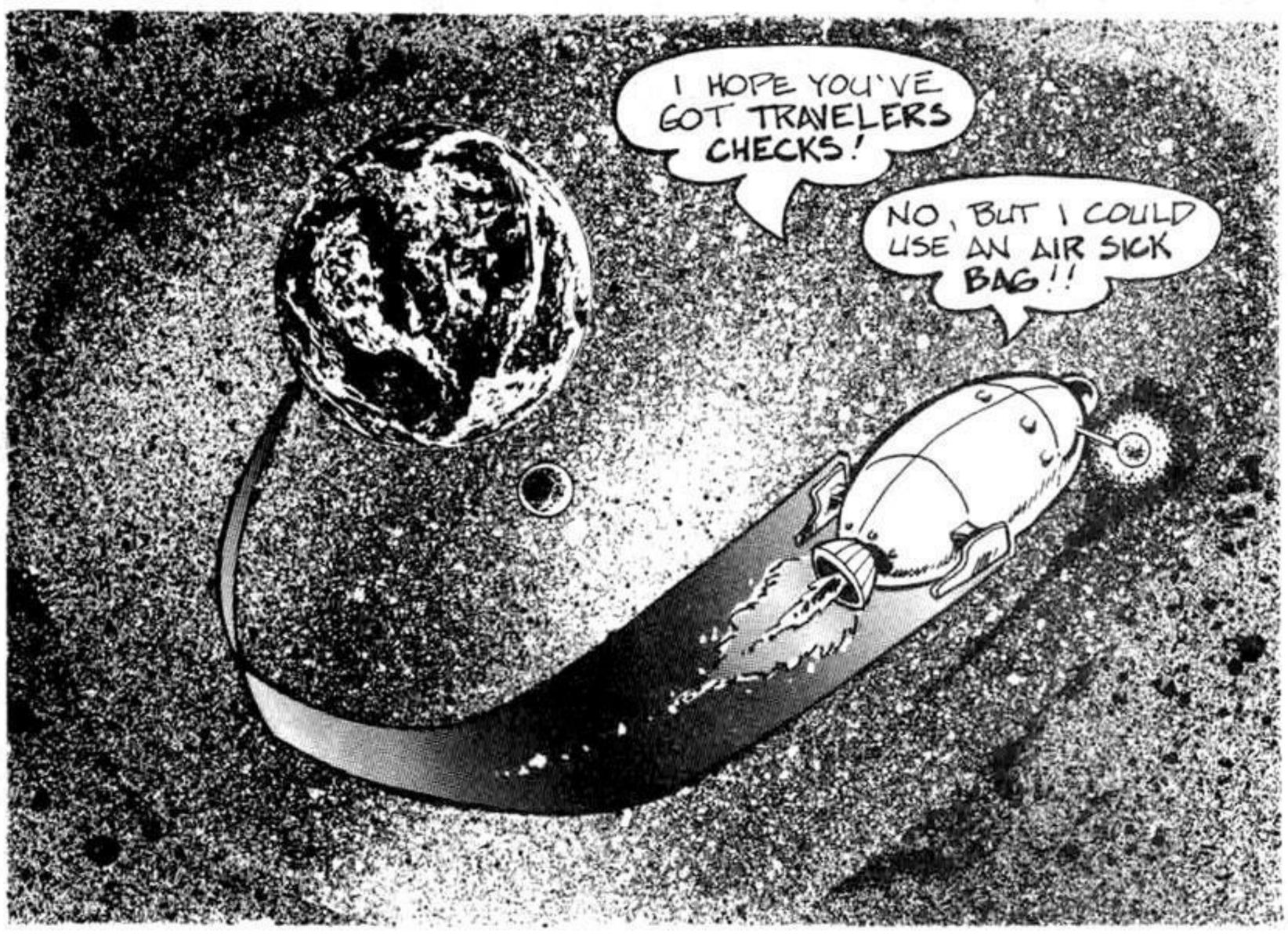
20th CENTURY OX

IT'S STRANGE, HERE WE WERE FACE TO FACE WITH THE UNKNOWN, AND MY FIRST THOUGHT WAS: DID I HAVE ON CLEAN UNDERWEAR AND HOW LONG WAS IT LIKELY TO STAY THAT WAY?!!

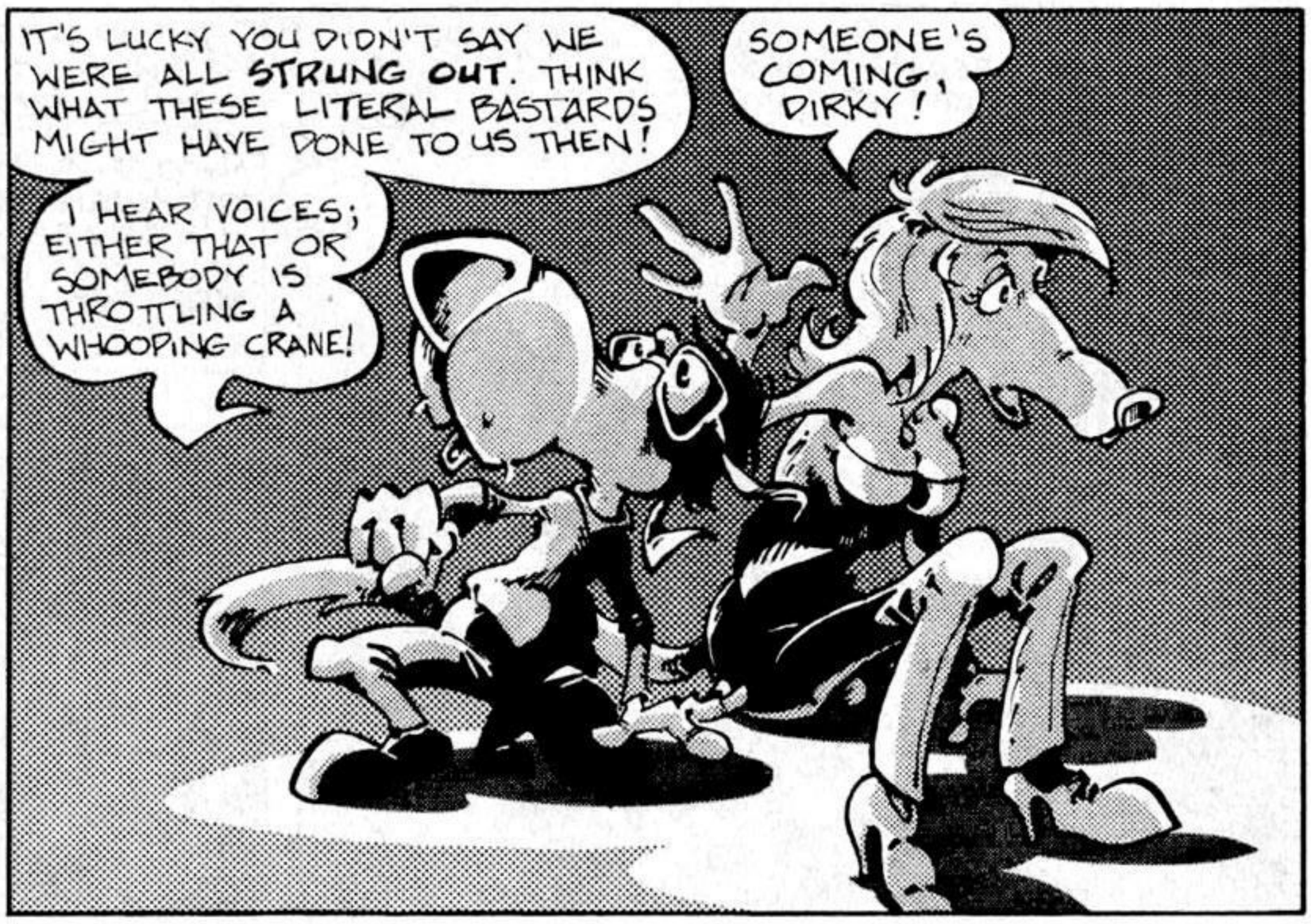
THAT'S ONE **MOTHER** OF A SHIP!!

DON'T PANIC, MAYBE IT'S JUST **SWAMP GAS** OR **MASS HYSTERIA**!!

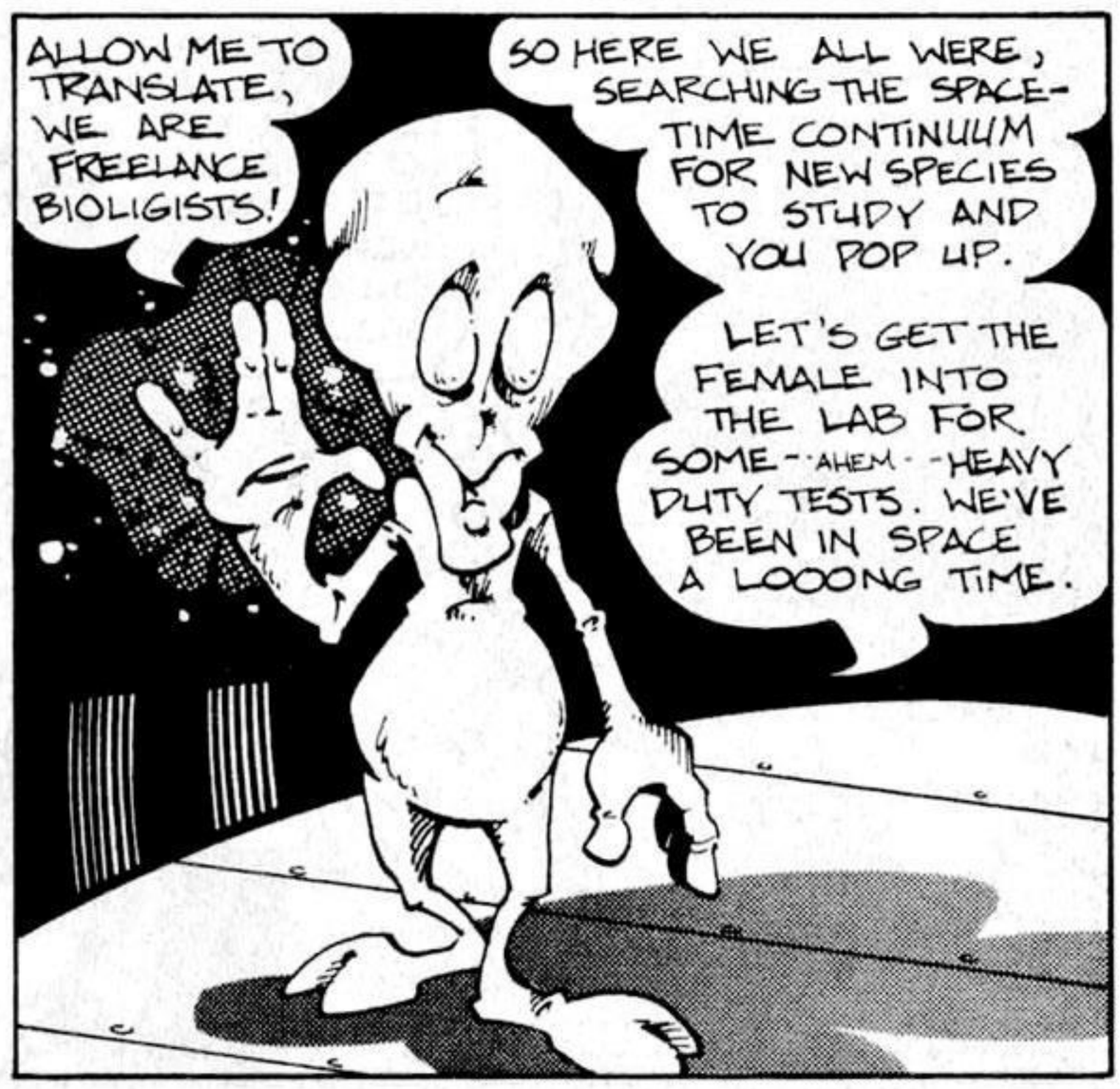
SNAKE XING

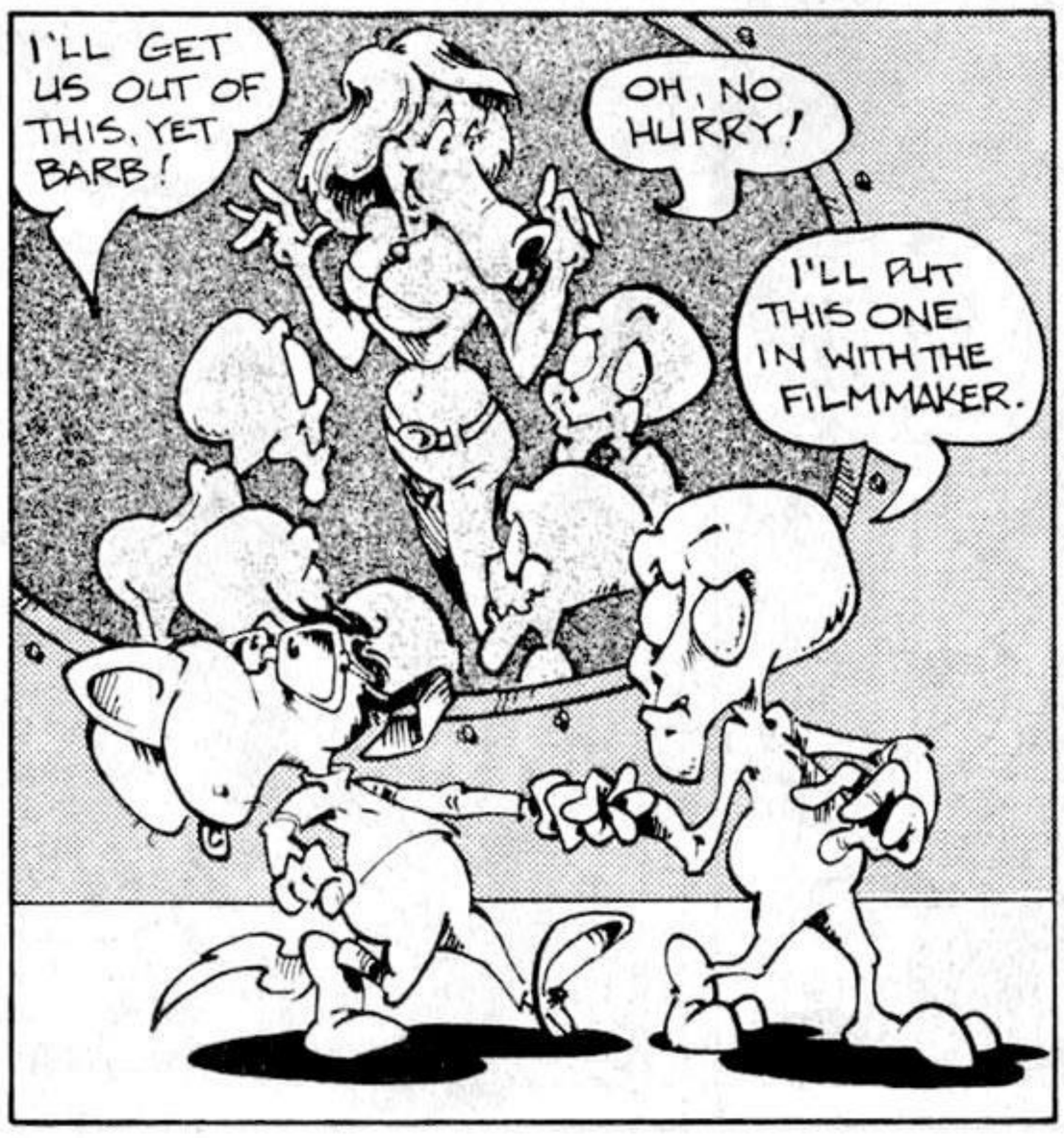


SORRY I SAID WE NEEDED A LIFT!
THAT'S ALRIGHT!


IT'S LUCKY YOU DIDN'T SAY WE WERE ALL **STRUNG OUT**. THINK WHAT THESE LITERAL BASTARDS MIGHT HAVE DONE TO US THEN!
SOMEONE'S COMING, DIRKY!
I HEAR VOICES; EITHER THAT OR SOMEBODY IS THROTTLING A WHOOPING CRANE!

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM, DO YOU SPEAK ANY OTHER LANGUAGES?
JUST PIGEON ENGLISH, AND THAT'S FOR THE BIRDS!


ALLOW ME TO TRANSLATE, WE ARE FREELANCE BIOLIGISTS!
SO HERE WE ALL WERE, SEARCHING THE SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM FOR NEW SPECIES TO STUDY AND YOU POP UP.
LET'S GET THE FEMALE INTO THE LAB FOR SOME--AHEM--HEAVY DUTY TESTS. WE'VE BEEN IN SPACE A LOOONG TIME.


I'LL GET US OUT OF THIS, YET BARB!
OH, NO HURRY!
I'LL PUT THIS ONE IN WITH THE FILMMAKER.

A FILM-MAKER?!
SLAM
WELL, WELL, A TALKING PUPPY!
WANT TO FETCH?
MAYBE LATER!

A HUMAN!! THEY HADN'T BEEN HEARD OF SINCE THE SECOND COMING OF THE GREAT GRAY RABBIT!

MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD OF ME, I'M STEVEN STEALBURB-

YEA?! BEHIND YOUR BACK TOO? LOOK, PAL, I'M OUTTA THIS DUMP! I DON'T INTEND TO BECOME ONE OF THEIR SPECIMENS. HOW 'BOUT YOU?

-BUT MY FRIENDS CALL ME AMAZING

TOO LATE! THEY ALREADY GOT ME UNDER THE KNIFE! AND THOSE SQUISHY LITTLE GINKS STOLE MY VIDEO CAMERA!!

MY OLD MENTOR, OBI-WAN COYOTE, MAY BE ABLE TO HELP. BUT I MUST MEDITATE TO CONTACT HIM.

GA' DAMMIT! I SAID FORE!!

?

-OM-
-OM-
-OM-
-OM-
-OM-

LOOK, DUCLAW, I DIDN'T GIVE YOU POWERS SO THAT I'D GET BOTHERED EVERY TIME YOU GET IN TROUBLE!

LEARN ANYTHING?

SOME NEW SWEAR WORDS. LOOK, I THINK I CAN HELP, BUT I NEED PRIVACY TO SUMMON MY POWERS.

I'LL JUST SLIP IN HERE.

LOOK OUT FOR MY SWEAT SOCKS, THEY'RE RANK!

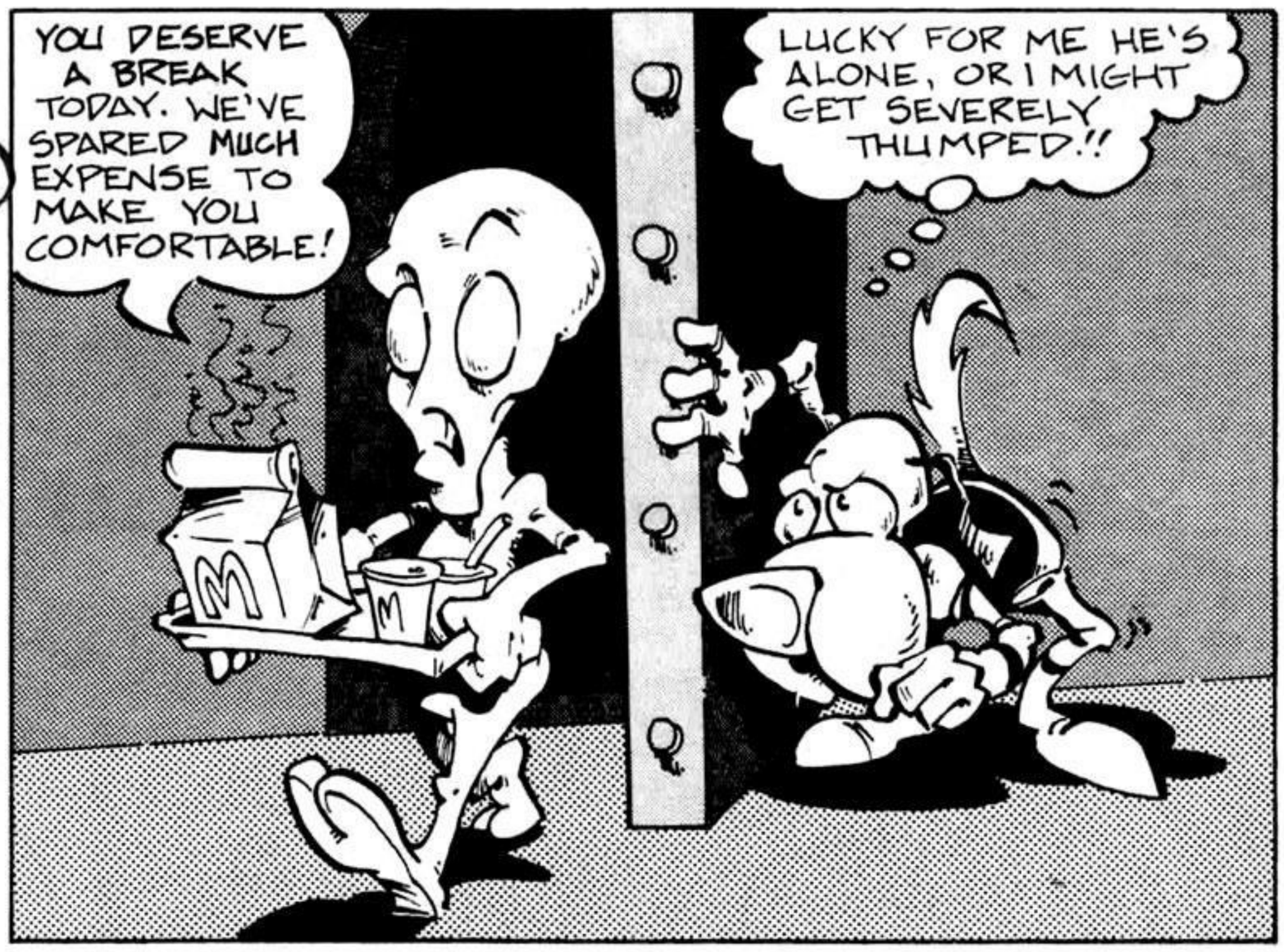
AN' NO PEEKING!

BOOM

YOU TURNED BLUE!!! I TOLD YOU TO WATCH OUT FOR MY SOCKS!

WHEN I CHANGE, I DON'T MESS AROUND!

YOU HAVE A PLAN?
NO, BUT THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN WHEN I PUT ON THIS COSTUME.
SSSH


YOU DESERVE A BREAK TODAY. WE'VE SPARED MUCH EXPENSE TO MAKE YOU COMFORTABLE!
LUCKY FOR ME HE'S ALONE, OR I MIGHT GET SEVERELY THUMPED!!

EAT UP, ALIENS...
OOOFF!!
I'M NOT AN ALIEN, I'M FROM EARTH!

YOU PLAY PRETTY ROUGH!
I USED TO RUN WITH A PACK OF DOGS; HALF A DOZEN OR SO!
OH, A SIX PACK!
R·I·I·I·TE!

WHERE ARE ALL THE SQUISHY LITTLE ALIENS?
I THINK A FRIEND OF MINE IS KEEPING THEM ENTERTAINED.

IS IT HOT IN HERE, OR IS IT ME?
I DON'T FEEL A BIT WELL!
IT'S YOU, I'M COOL AS A CHILLY DOG!

WHAT WAS I SAYING ABOUT TROUBLE? MY SITUATION IS NEVER SO BAD THAT IT CAN'T GET WORSE.
SAY, YOU'RE BEGINING TO LOOK A LITTLE BLUE AROUND THE EDGES, AND I'VE GOT A COPYRIGHT ON THAT COLOR! SO CUT IT OUT!!
THEN, RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES, AMAZING STEVEN TURNED INTO SOMETHING MORE HORRIBLE THAN HE'D EVER IMAGINED IN HIS WILDEST SCREENPLAY.
AND HE PROCEEDED TO COME ON TO ME LIKE HULK HOGGSTER.
WOW! YOU REALLY LIVE UP TO YOUR NICKNAME!
JUST BECAUSE I WEAR THIS COSTUME DOES NOT MEAN I'M INTO SLUGGING IT OUT WITH LARGE REPTILES.

I KNEW I'D NEVER LAST DOWN HERE, BUT BASHING MONSTERS IS OUT OF MY LEAGUE.

WHAT I NEEDED WAS A LITTLE SAGE ADVICE ON THE ART OF MONSTER DISPOSAL. BUT SINCE MY FAITHLESS INDIAN COMPANION WAS TOO BUSY WITH HIS 9 IRON, I'D JUST HAVE TO LOOK ELSEWHERE. LUCKILY I KNEW WHERE TO TURN.

IF I COULD FIND A COMPUTER TERMINAL; YOU SEE, I KEEP A FRIEND OF MINE ON A FLOPPY DISK. HE LIKES IT THERE.

AH-HA!

HE'S A FOUNT OF USELESS INFORMATION. **QUAX BEDROOM**, THE COMPUTER GENERATED **DUCK**!

HEY, BIG BLUE! LONG TIME N-N-NO SCAN!

LOOK, QUAX I'M BEING HUNTED DOWN BY A LARGE HOSTILE CREATURE. I COULD USE A BIT OF HELP!

I HAVE NO ARMS OR LEGS AND YOU WANT **MY** HELP! YOU'RE REALLY DESPERATE!!

WELL, THIS BIG **FROG** DOESN'T SCARE ME! UNLESS HE'S GOT A REMOTE CONTROL!

P-P-POPULAR CINEMA TRADITION HAS IT THAT MONSTERS SHOULD BE DISPOSED OF QUICKLY...

...BY FLUSHING THEM OUT A CONVIENIENT **AIR LOCK**! IN SPACE NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU **CROAK**!!

NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND, I WAS WATCHING MY FAVORITE **50**'S SITCOM: "I LOVE MOOSIE"

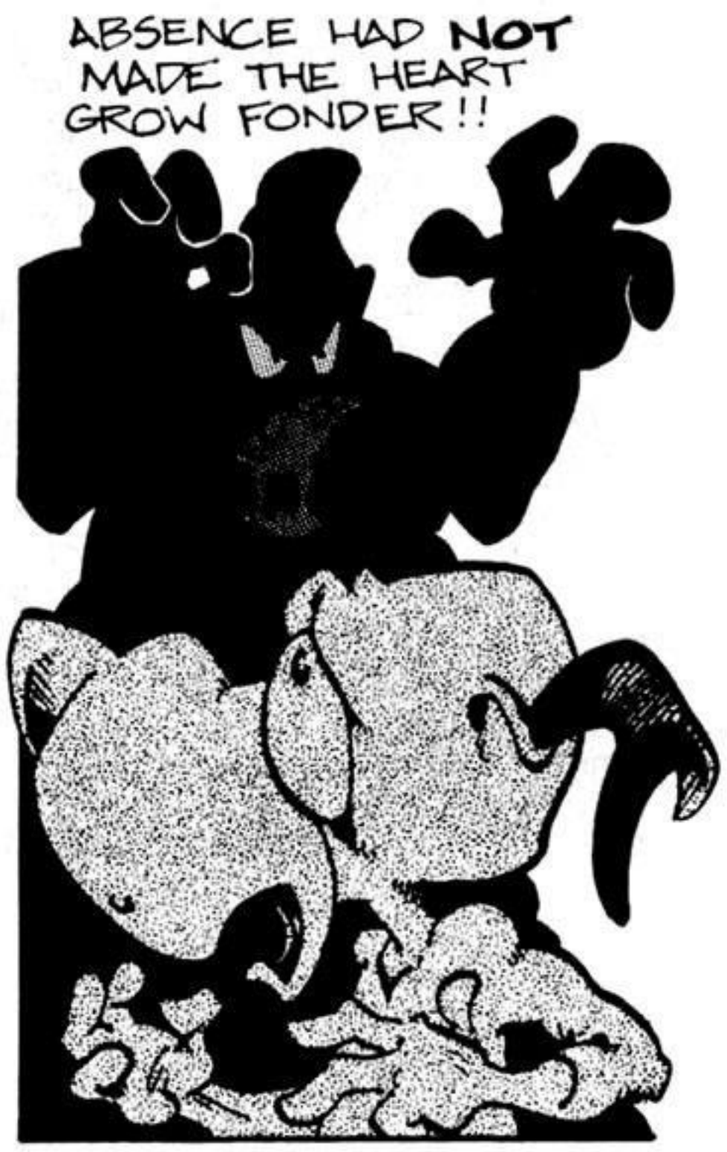
OH, PLEEEEEZE HONEY! CAN'T **LITTLE ROCKY** AND I BE IN YOUR SHOW?

LOOK, I CAN PULL A RABBIT OUT OF MY HAT!

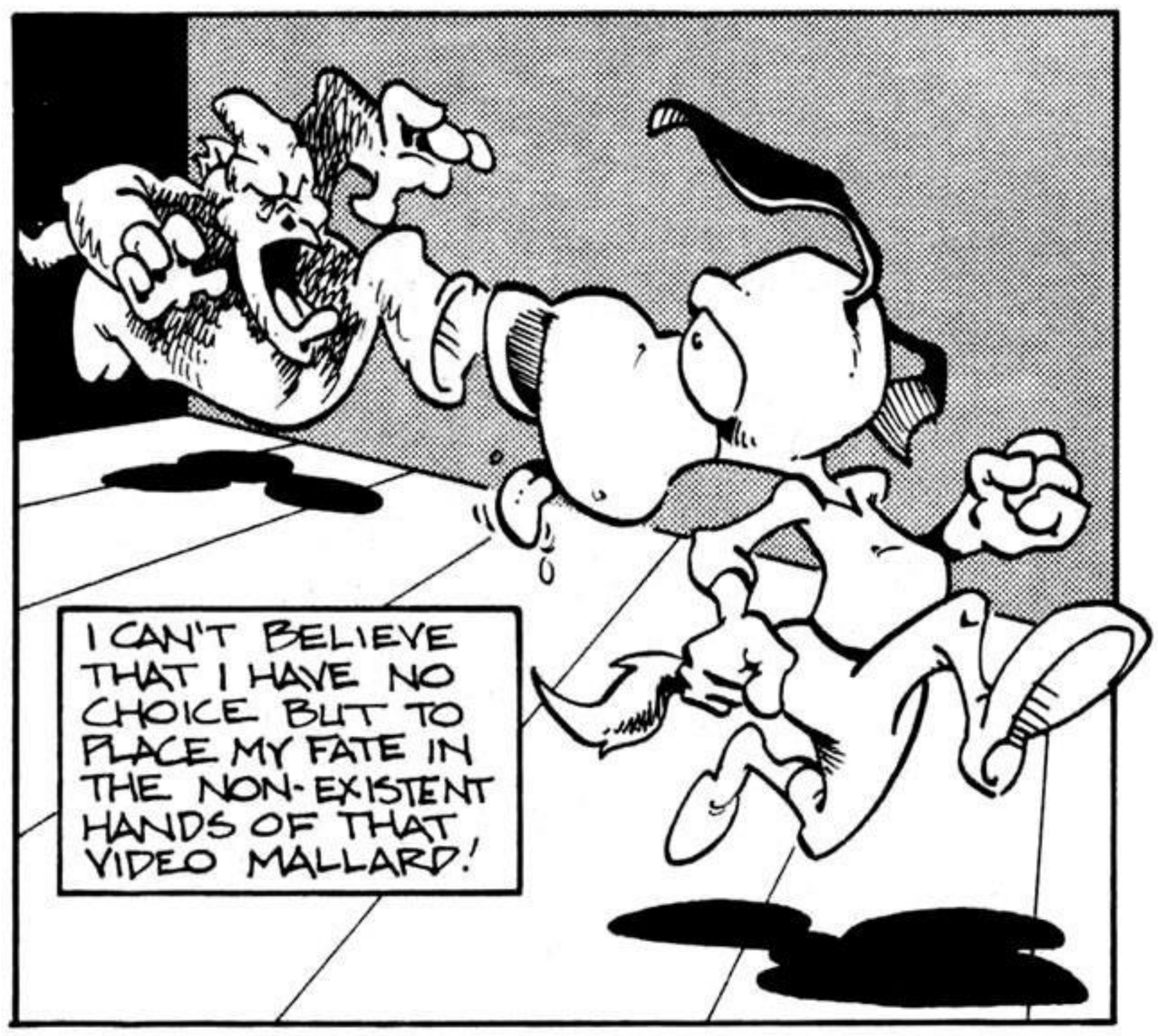
AIE, AIE, AIE!!! MOOSIE, JEW MAK ME SOOO **KRAZEE**!

GEE, AN' I THOUGHT HIS FAVORITE WAS GOFER PYLE! ME, I LIKE TV, WHITE NOISE 24 HOURS A DAY. HOW RELAXING!!

GRRRR


ABSENCE HAD NOT MADE THE HEART GROW FONDER!!

THIS GUY HAD A GUT LIKE ORSON WHALES, WITH THE CONSISTENCY OF TOAD-FLAVORED JELLO. I SOON REALIZED THAT QUAX WAS RIGHT.


I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO PLACE MY FATE IN THE NON-EXISTENT HANDS OF THAT VIDEO MALLARD!

WHOA, HOW CONVENIENT!
AIR LOCK

HATCH RELEASE
CLICK...
HISSSSS.....

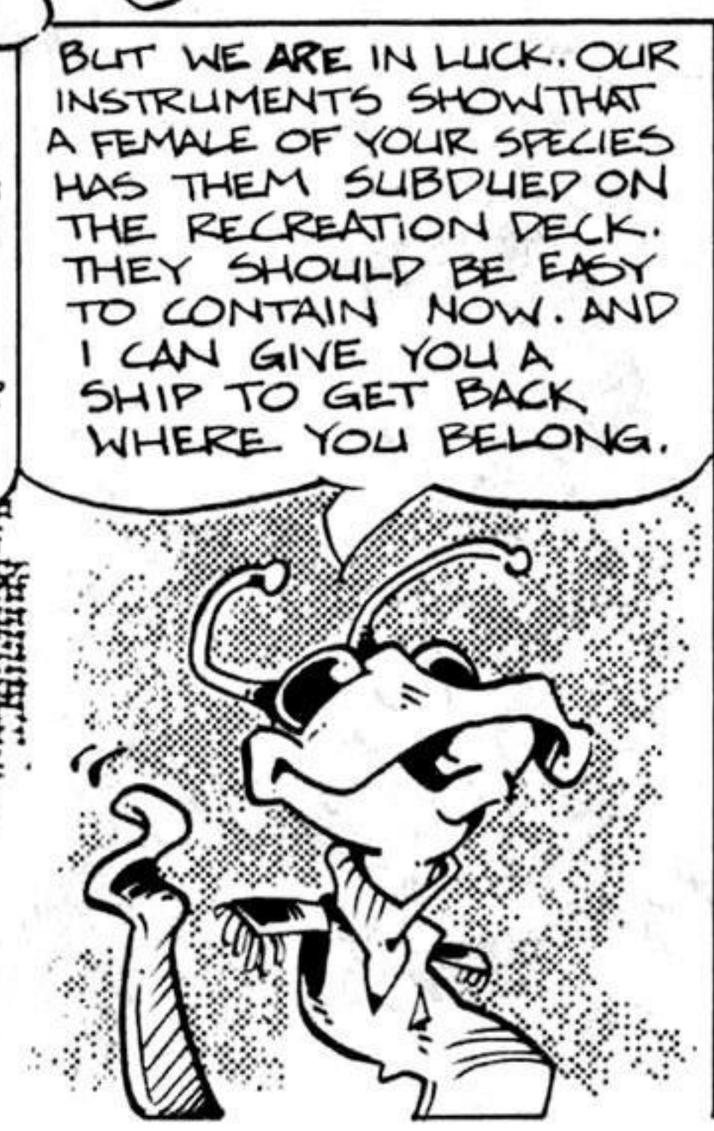
SUDDENLY I FELT LIKE A DOE WHO HAD WANDERED INTO A STAG BAR.

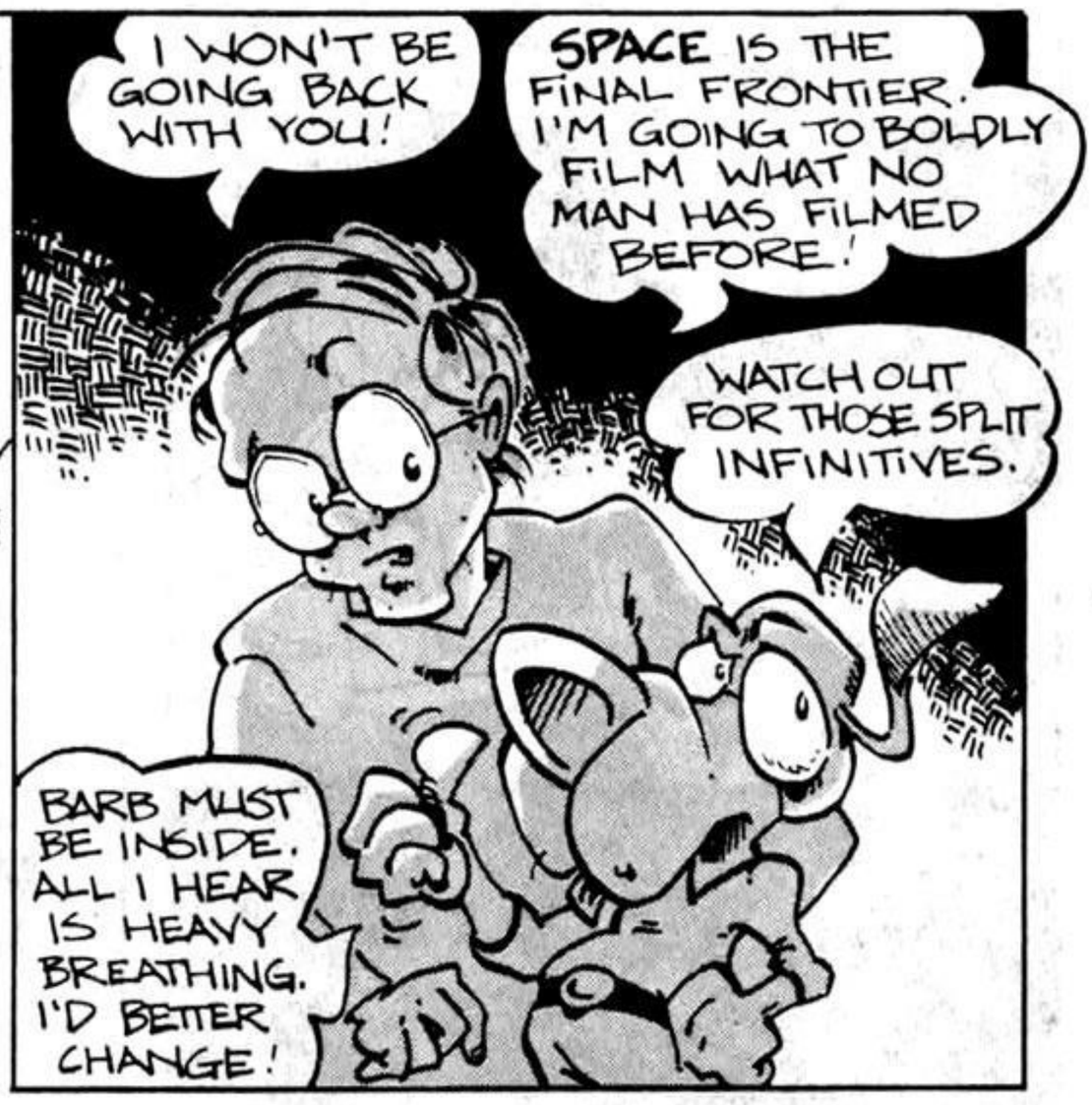
HE'S DEAD, GYM!
NO, HE'S NOT, BONES! HE FAINTED!

MUCH LATER
LOOK, CAP'N, HE'S COMING AROUND.

YOU'RE ONE LUCKY PUPPY! DR. BONES PATCHED YOU AND YOUR FRIEND UP!
STEVE, ARE YOU OK?
YEAH, AMAZING INNIT?

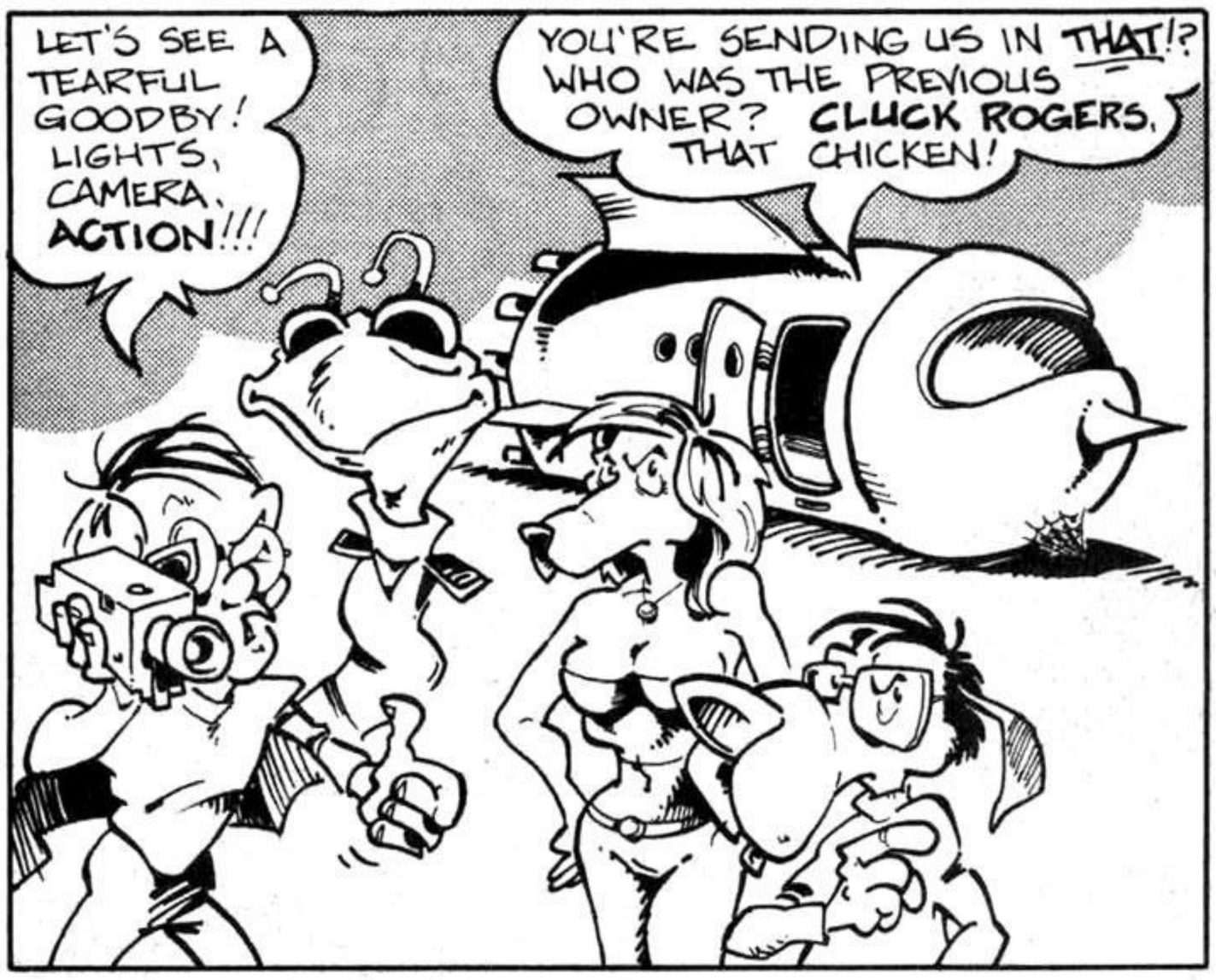
I CAN EXPLAIN. I'M CAPTAIN GYM QUARK. THIS IS MY SHIP. WE WERE TRANSPORTING A GROUP OF RENEGADE PORNOGRAPHERS TO PRISON ON CLOITIS MAJOR WHEN THEY COMMANDEERED THE SHIP. WE'VE BEEN LOCKED UP 'TIL YOU CAME BY.

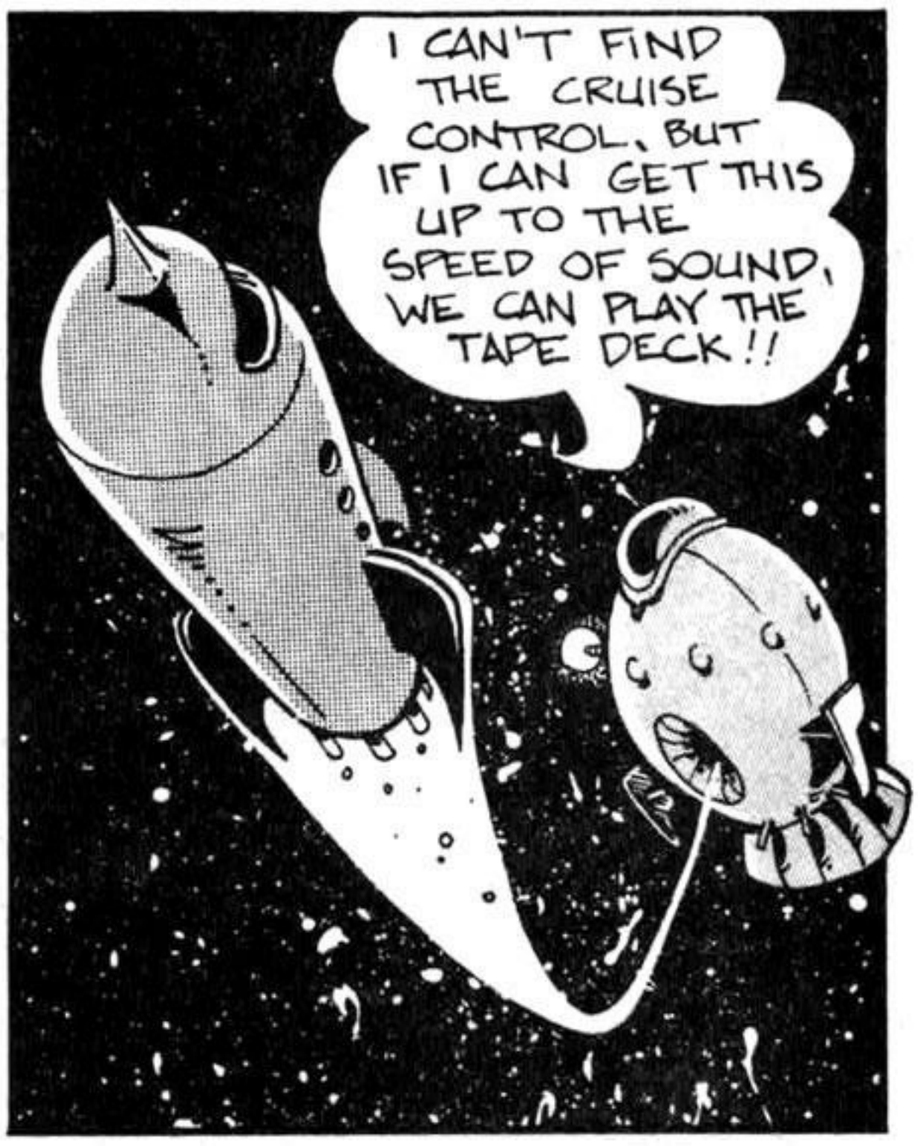

BUT WE ARE IN LUCK. OUR INSTRUMENTS SHOW THAT A FEMALE OF YOUR SPECIES HAS THEM SUBDUED ON THE RECREATION DECK. THEY SHOULD BE EASY TO CONTAIN NOW. AND I CAN GIVE YOU A SHIP TO GET BACK WHERE YOU BELONG.


I WON'T BE GOING BACK WITH YOU!
SPACE IS THE FINAL FRONTIER. I'M GOING TO BOLDLY FILM WHAT NO MAN HAS FILMED BEFORE!
WATCH OUT FOR THOSE SPLIT INFINITIVES.
BARB MUST BE INSIDE. ALL I HEAR IS HEAVY BREATHING. I'D BETTER CHANGE!

WOW! IT'S LIKE A SCENE FROM "DOGGIE DOES DALLAS!"
MY CAMERA!

GOOD WORK, SLIM! YOU SINGLEHANDEDLY WORE THOSE GUYS DOWN TO A NUB, AND DIDN'T EVEN WORK UP A SWEAT!
ALL IN THE LINE OF DUTY. ~...SIGH~


LET'S SEE A TEARFUL GOODBY! LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!!!
YOU'RE SENDING US IN THAT!? WHO WAS THE PREVIOUS OWNER? CLUCK ROGERS, THAT CHICKEN!


I CAN'T FIND THE CRUISE CONTROL, BUT IF I CAN GET THIS UP TO THE SPEED OF SOUND, WE CAN PLAY THE TAPE DECK!!

SOMETHING IS KNOCKING AROUND BACK IN THE HOLD.
OOOH, LET ME CHECK, DIRKY!

THIS MAY TAKE SOME TIME TO GET IT SETTLED DOWN!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I FEEL JUST LIKE TOM CURZ IN "TOP DOG"!! (ONLY TALLER.)

... BUT I STILL FEEL LIKE WE'RE NOT ALONE!
YOU'LL GET OVER IT!

NEXT
WATCH OUT!! IT'S THE WATCHDOGS
THEY ARE WATCHING OUT FOR YOU!!

Carol Lay's

GOOD GIRLS

"It had something to do with her hair..."
She's got the job
(love-lorn columnist for
a great metropolitan newspaper).
She's got the friends
(Ultra-Ma, Stupendo Boy).
She's got the costume
(covered with hearts, no less).
But she just can't fly!
She's Monica Saunders.
Ms. Lonelyhearts.
Oh, yeah.
She's got the hair,
too.

Find out why they're good.

© 1986 Carol Lay

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

LETTERS

Message to **All**:

I have had it up to my fuzzy ears with this debate!!!

I'm settling this right now—enough of "funny-animals," enough of "anthropomorphic." **They are Critters!!!** That's why the name of this 'zine is what it is! If the characters and stories, serious **or** funny, weren't **Critters**, they wouldn't be in a magazine called **Critters** now, would they?!?

I **hope** this clears things up a bit...

Mike Higgs
Fantasy Studios Unltd.

Very good. Now, for extra bonus points, explain what "The King of Springfield" is doing on this page. **—KT**

Dear Kim,

Just thought I would drop a line to tell you how I felt about **Critters** #14. Even though I will not comment on the "Usagi" story (now that he has his own book), I did want to comment on the rest of the issue. First, I have not completely decided yet whether or not I liked the "Gnuff" story, but did want to say that the story looks to be well-paced and well-written. The only complaint I have about it is the character Gulliver. Doesn't he appear to be a little too protective? Well, this is a two-parter, so hopefully he will have redeemed himself by next issue.

The "Birthright" chapter, on the other hand, did not meet my expectations at all. The look of the story gave me the impression that the printer had run out of ink and was trying to conserve with this story. I am sorry, but I have gotten used to the wonderful art of Steve's having a better look. Well, I guess you can't win them all. By the way, you can tell Steve that the writing on this chapter showed that he is continuing to improve this series with every issue. If not for the washed-out look, I would have listed this chapter among the best yet!

Well, I better close for now (this is the third letter I have written today; but the only one to a comic book). Sorry I have no art this issue from Amy, but she is busy preparing some work to submit to the Goldfish Society of America of which she is a member. Hopefully, next time, I will have some more to send.

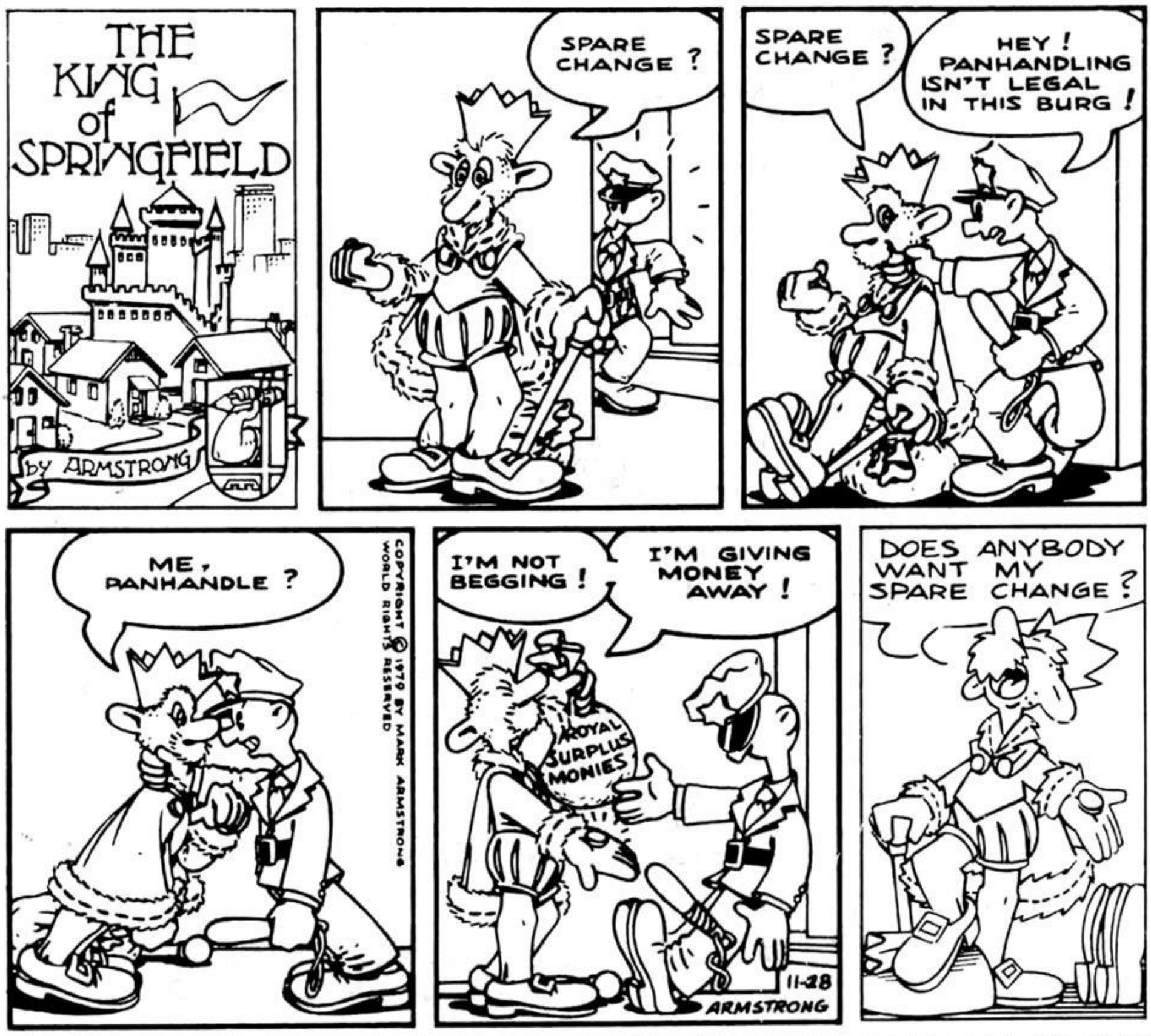
Steven Laughlin
Santa Clara, CA

The what society of America? Anyway, that chapter of "Birthright II" took place entirely in the snow, which may be why you thought it looked a little pale. When you read the whole story in one sitting, it should make a nice respite from the gloomy, dark interiors Steve normally tends to draw. And Gulliver didn't redeem himself in the continuation of "Gnuff," sorry to say. On the other hand, if you care enough about a story to be upset at one of the characters' behavior, doesn't it say something for the story? (An artist friend of mine got really perturbed at the Usagi Yojimbo story "Blind Swordspig" and called up to lament the cruelty of the ending. "But they were such good friends," he said plaintively. "How could Stan do this to them?") **—KT**

To the Creators of **Critters #15**:

Critters continues to be a highly enjoyable magazine. In issue **#15**, I enjoyed three of the five works. "Quax Bedroom" was marvelous! Exactly what interests me in a gag strip—just the right touch of in-joke, but with the ability to still be funny for people who "aren't in the know." And after my introduction with Fuller in "Quax," you spring the new series of **Blue Beagle** on me. Scott Shaw!, watch

The King of Springfield by Mark Armstrong



out!! Tim Fuller wants to be the numero uno phunny animal phunster. Excellent, excellent. I look forward to seeing lots more of Fuller. (By the way, with a last name like that, I expect to see Buckminster cathedrals or domes.)

I can't get enuff of Gallacci. Luckily, Eclipse has **Fusion** and Fantagraphics Books' **Critters** continues the "Birthright" series. Though both are done in the same style—utilizing more gray tones than your average black and white (Sim's **Cerebus** is the other master of the gray tone set)—and though each is set in a more realistic SF world than the average comic, both are still separate entities. I'm referring to the art here. The stories are definitely apart, since the two series have different writers. Gallacci shows other artists that it is possible to have the same style, but still be able to differentiate one's work.

On what I didn't like: "The Children's Hour" was mundane. Merely average in what was, up to page 21, an exceptional book. I'm happy that you wish to showcase work by artists that never received acclamation when deserved, but surely Vezina had something that could have done him more justice than this one page. (As a side note, let me commend Fantagraphics for its dedication to the field. Every time I sit down with the **Popeye** volumes or **Nemo**, I notice your company's name and say, "Thank you.")

"Fission Chicken" was a paradox. I enjoyed reading it, but the artwork was on par with what I could draw, and, frankly, I'm just a doodler. In your editorial you call this an ultra-cartoony style. Hmmm, I would just call it sub-par.

But still, the magazine as a whole continues to be far above sub-par, and if you can continue just one strip I enjoy, I plan to continue picking it up.

Glen E. Cox
Austin, TX

How about if I print a 10-page strip and 22 blank pages? Sorry you didn't get into the art on "Fission Chicken." I think J.P. Morgan's style is deceptive—while his art is simple-looking, his cartooning is inventive and funny. How do you feel about Matt Groening's work?

Hope you enjoyed the Blue Beagle story in this issue. I think it's a lot funnier and better-drawn than the first one—and wait until you see Tim's cover-featured "Watchdogs" episode in #22! **—KT**

Dear Kim Thompson,

When "Birthright I" was over, I thought to myself, "Oh no! They can't do that! It would be like throwing Usagi Yojimbo into the street!" When I found out about "Birthright II" I eagerly awaited it, but still bought all the issues in-between on account of my other faves, "Gnuff" and "Usagi." And speaking of Usagi, I've followed him partially through **Albedo**, of which I have half the isues. In school, we had to do a 1,200 word report on "Japanese" art, so I did a report on Usagi! (That'll make Stan happy! My teacher loved the report and she fell "in love" with Usagi! No kidding!!)

I like it, but...**I don't get it**! It's too confusing, too vague, too something! Kenda looks like Jenna, the anti-Royalists look like god-knows-what, everyone looks the same! If Steve is having a tough time doing Albedo and "Birthright," why doesn't he do one or the other, and not rush "Birthright"? Still, it has appeal and the story glitches are not enough to make me stop reading it.

About "Bounty Hunter II": I was glad Usagi gave Gennosuke what he had coming. It was pretty crummy of Gen to cheat Usagi in the first place! (By the way, how **do** you say "Usagi"??) I really liked the story (as I like all of Stan's work). Even my mom likes Usagi and also especially Nilson Groundthumper and Hermy. Still, I do like Gen, and I think he and Usagi should work together. But, in issue 3, page 5, bottom panel, was that Gennosuke tipping his hat to Usagi? You know, the rhino on the right? Ever since I caught that little touch, I've been wondering if it was Genno. Let's see Gen in the future issue, but, please, no "Bounty Hunter III".

New paper. It's cheap. I don't like it much at all, but what can I say? However, the quality of the book is going down. In issue **#12**, the contents page said: "Amanda and the Professor make a few sacrifices to archaeology." It should've been "Angela and the Professor," either that or Reed must have screwed up. Doubtful.

At first, I thought the table of contents on **#13** were messed up too, but (heh) the joke's on me! Sorry. (This proves reading the editorial **is** important.) [*When did you ever doubt it?* **—KT**]

When I was just starting my **Critters** collection (I started with number 6), I ordered #s **4** and **5** from Fantagraphics Books (you guys). The comics came promptly and in very good condition. Thanks.

Don't take this letter as my wholly complaining about **Critters**. I just found a few glitches that I thought I should point out. I am not the next Brent Winter, don't worry. I still like **Critters** a lot (as a declaration of that liking, the only comics I regularly collect are **Albedo** and **Critters**. Oh, and **Maus**, which is, literally, a comic-book), and I promise, you have a **Critters** fan for life!

Andrea Feldman
Berkeley, CA

P.S. Enclosed is a picture of Usagi that I drew! I **like** drawing Usagi; after all, he's very likable. He's not quite like the Usagi Stan draws, but...let me put it this way, if Stan's ever sick, **I'll draw Usagi!!**

What's that you say—Stan is sick! You need a fill-in story? Great! I—

"**Honey! Wake up! You'll be late for school!**" (So much for that idea.) Back to the ol' drawing board.

Considering the fact that Stan is two issues ahead of the printing schedule on USAGI, we doubt we'll have to use a fill-in artist in any event—but thanks for the offer. The "g" in "Usagi" is hard—the rest is easy. And our harried subscription staff appreciates your kind words. It's not often people write letters telling them what they've done RIGHT. **—KT**

Welcome to the Fantagraphics

ADVENTURES OF CAPT. JACK

Adventures of Captain Jack #1: Premiere issue! Beatniks, lava lamps, cosmic pinball, and other funny stuff.

Adventures of Captain Jack #2: "Another Saturday Night" Part 1: Herman dies, Adam finds a soulmate.

Adventures of Captain Jack #3: Part 2 of "Sat. Night": Herman and Beezlebub visit the netherworld.

Adventures of Captain Jack #4: Maniacal astronauts and more.

Adventures of Captain Jack #5: "Farmer Fred, I'm In Love With Your Daughter" Part 1: Arrival on Janet's planet.

Adventures of Captain Jack #6: Part 2 Herman and Janet decide to go away together.

Adventures of Captain Jack #7: Part 3: Beezlebub intrudes in Herman and Janet's relationship.

Adventures of Captain Jack #8: Pool hustling and more.

CRITTERS

Critters #4: *Gnuff* and *Birthright* continue, *Lionheart* premieres, and the first Ken Macklin cover painting!

Critters #5: *Birthright* continues, the first *Gnuff* novel concludes (with a cover), plus Stan Sakai's *Nilson Groundthumper*!

Critters #6: *Usagi Yojimbo* tale with cover, *Birthright* concludes, and the first *Firecracker Jack* by Mark Armstrong!

Critters #7: Gnuff returns in *Animal Graffiti*, Usagi Yojimbo, and *De Grand Wa-Zoo* by Sam Kieth!

Critters #8: *Jack Bunny* by cover artist Mark Armstrong, Templeton Kelly tribute, and *Lionheart* begins.

Critters #9: Hallowe'en issue with Gnuff behind a mask, Lionheart's nightmare, and Dog Boy.

Critters #10: *Usagi Yojimbo* cover and story, plus the continuations of *Gnuff* and *Lionheart*.

Critters #11: Special Christmas issue, featuring the conclusions of *Usagi Yojimbo, Gnuff*, and *Lionheart*, plus work by Mike Kazaleh, J. Holland and Ron Wilber, Mark Armstrong, Ty Templeton, Sam Kieth, Steve Lafler, and Ken Macklin. 68 pages!

Critters #12: *Birthright* returns, with a cover by Gallacci, plus Reed Waller and Kate Worley, and Sam Kieth!

Critters #13: *Gnuff* cover and 16-page chapter, plus *Birthright*, *Surf-in' Neanderthals* by Mark Armstrong.

Critters #14: *Usagi Yojimbo* story and cover, plus *Birthright* and *Gnuff* continue.

Critters #15: *The Blue Beagle* and *Fission Chicken* both debut, and *Birthright* races on!

DOG BOY

Dog Boy #1: Journey off into surreal experiences with "Werewolf Bikers" and more!

Dog Boy #2: Sir Isaac Newton guest stars as reality unravels.

Dog Boy #3: Dog Boy shows how to publish your own comic book.

Dog Boy #4: Dog Boy goes to Hell, plus Dog Girl invades the White House. Guest starring Reagan!

HUGO

Hugo #1: Milton (*Midnite*) Knight's feline "Meets the Baron."

Hugo #2: Hugo becomes a cartoonist and gets into deep trouble.

Hugo #3: Hugo is abducted by mermaids and fights sharks.

MYRON MOOSE

Myron Moose Funnies #1: Lots of goofy snot jokes, plus parodies of Dr. Seuss and Uncle Wriggly books.

USAGI YOJIMBO

Usagi Yojimbo #1: Usagi journeys back to his youth and tells how he became a samurai. Plus: Fujitake!

Usagi Yojimbo #2: Usagi goes into training and has his first duel. Plus: A new strip by Dave Thorne.

BOOKS

The Beast Is Dead: Magnificent 1945 French graphic novel chronicling World War II as fought by animals. Stunning full-color work; hardcover!

Usagi Yojimbo Book One: Every *Usagi Yojimbo* story published to date collected in one handy 160-page volume, with a new Stan Sakai cover.

MAGAZINES

Amazing Heroes #8: Behind the scenes of DC's *Captain Carrot* comic with Scott Shaw! and Roy Thomas. Plus a funny-animal pictorial.

Amazing Heroes #42: Funny-animal issue with Joshua Quagmire cover and interview. Plus: Arn Saba on Neil the Horse and Dave Sim on Cerebus!

Amazing Heroes #111: Ty Templeton (of *Critters*) interviewed. It's funny.

The Comics Journal #73: Carl Barks featured, with long retrospective.

The Comics Journal #81-82: Mammoth interview with Dave (*Cerebus the Aardvark*) Sim.

The Comics Journal #99: Long interview with Arn (*Neil the Horse*) Saba.

OTHER STUFF

Anything Goes #2: Classic Alan Moore/Donald Simpson strip about death of comics includes several pages of Mike Kazaleh funny-animal characters. Plus Sam Kieth!

Anything Goes #3: Featuring a full-color Captain Jack story by Mike Kazaleh, Cerebus vignette by Dave Sim, and Cerebus cover by Neal Adams.

Doomsday Squad #3: Full-color Usagi Yojimbo back-up by Sakai.

Doomsday Squad #5: Full-color Captain Jack back-up by Kazaleh.

NEMO #21: 28 pages of Jack Kent's classic *King Aroo* strip—a treat for classic funny-animal lovers!

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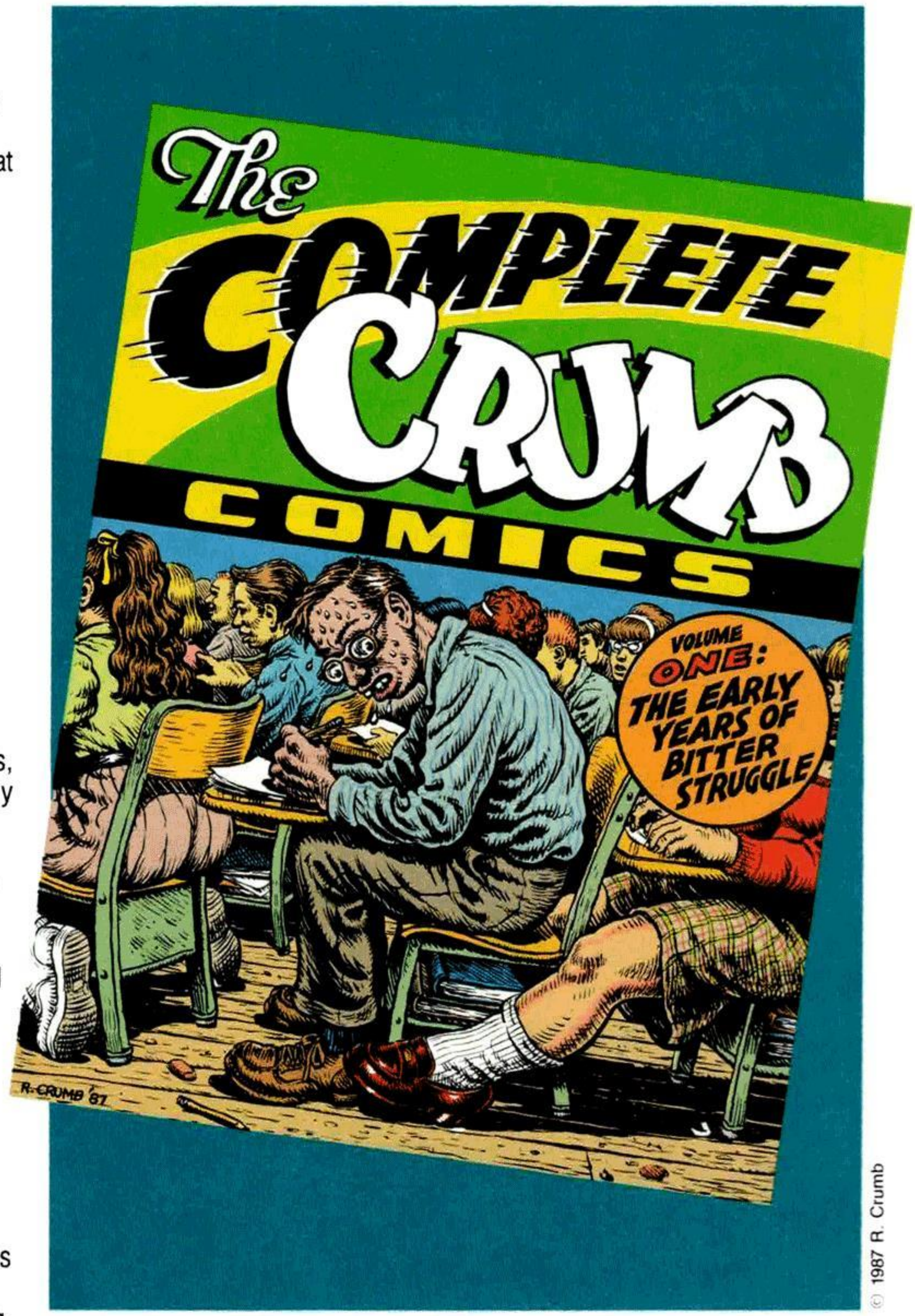

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